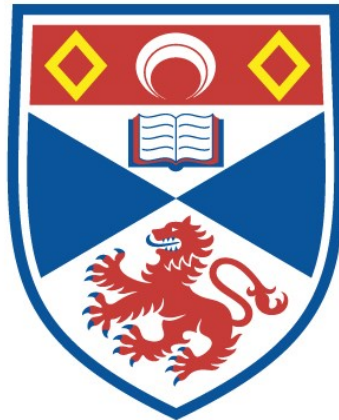


FORMS OF SOCIAL AND PERSONAL FULFILMENT AND  
NON-FULFILMENT IN THE OLD FRENCH NARRATIVE LAIS

Alison Mary Low

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews



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by ALISON M. LOW

Ph.D. Thesis Submitted to the  
University of Saint Andrews, June 1986.



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ABSTRACT

The Old French narrative *lais* offer an image of the individual in terms of both social and personal relationships. This study considers the extent to which it is possible to derive definitions of forms of social and personal fulfilment and non-fulfilment from these texts. As well as being presented in isolation, they are shown in interaction; there can never be a total divorce of the personal desires of the individual from his/her rights and obligations in society. These two aspects of human existence - love and society - appear in the *lais* in a state of balance or imbalance. Even in those *lais* in which the characters themselves do not achieve a balance of social and personal fulfilment, the image of the ideal emerges. Consummate fulfilment in a relationship - be it feudal, familial, sexual - necessarily involves a fusion of social suitability and personal commitment. In his/her aspirations to and/or success in fulfilment, the individual appears variously in these texts both as a pawn of the forces of society or destiny and as endowed with the power to earn his/her own happiness. The degree of importance that the interaction between love and society has in the *lais* is, in particular, indicated through the extent to which these patterns of interaction define the patterns of narrative structure. From this study, conclusions can be drawn as to the historical reality of the individual in twelfth-century noble society in France; the *lais* offering a reflection of that society, of which they are a product, and also an expression of its ideals, which allow for the very real obstacles to a fusion of social and personal fulfilment to be overcome.

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## INTRODUCTION

The texts chosen as the basis of this study are the thirty-six Old French narrative lais, listed at the end of the Introduction. This is an inclusive list, based on that given by Richard Baum<sup>1</sup>, and including texts sometimes considered as fabliaux, such as the Lai d'Aristote and Nabaret, and Narcisus and Piramus et Tisbé which are sometimes set alongside the romans d'antiquité. A wider rather than narrower range of texts seems desirable as a basis of any argumentation which might have applications beyond this particular literary genre.

The choice of the lais has, indeed, been determined not by their intrinsic appropriateness for a study of the notions of social and personal fulfilment and non-fulfilment. Other contemporary texts might yield just as much of interest in such a study. A wider selection of texts would, however, have made it impossible to offer more than a superficial overview. The relative brevity of the individual lais is one of the attractions for choosing them as a corpus of texts, as it allows for a detailed analysis of a large number of texts. Another attraction is the variety of the different lais, which is evident from the difficulty that has been found in attempting a definition of the genre applicable to each of the texts<sup>2</sup>. The Lai de l'Oiselet is very different, for example, from the Lai de l'Ombre, or equally but in a different way, from Bisclavret. Because of this lack of homogeneity among the lais, any conclusions to be drawn from a study of them will have more obvious potential for wider application than if they were more specifically identifiable as a genre distinct from other genres. They do, nonetheless, exist as a related group.

These factors combine to make the *lais* an obvious choice for analysis - their brevity, their existence as a recognisable body of texts, their variety. It should be possible to draw conclusions about the different *lais* as separate entities and about the genre as a whole, and also to suggest a more general application of such conclusions to other forms of contemporary literature, such as the romances and the *chansons de geste*.

The aims of the study are to define what in the *lais* may be considered to be forms of social and personal fulfilment and non-fulfilment, and to assess the importance that these have in a literary context and also, possibly, in terms of wider sociological and historical significance.

The focus of attention is on the four areas: forms of social fulfilment, of social non-fulfilment, of personal fulfilment and of personal non-fulfilment. Each of these will be considered in a separate chapter, with a final chapter considering the way in which the different forms interrelate to form the basis of the narrative structure.

The first chapter will present a more general catalogue of the descriptions of the characters in the *lais*. Such character descriptions appear normally at the beginning of the *lai*, serving as an initial introduction to the protagonists, focusing the reader's attention and sympathies towards them. From a comparison of these, we shall get some idea of the degree of conventionality in them: whether the different authors express individual notions of those personality traits to be found ideally in a hero or heroine, or whether they adhere to conventional values. Whether or not there

is any justification in interpreting the character descriptions in terms of the individual authors, they do, nonetheless, provide the reader with an initial, basic insight into the standards that apply in the lai. It is these thumbnail portraits that first indicate to the reader the grounds on which an individual can be considered worthy of achieving fulfilment, whether social or personal.

The second chapter will also appear primarily as a catalogue, concerned with defining the forms whereby an individual can be said to be socially fulfilled. For this there will be a consideration of the range of society that appears in the different lais. It is this that provides the framework within which the individual exists and acts. Society appears as a physical context - a royal court, a noble household, a town, as opposed to the wilderness of the forest. It appears in an almost abstract sense to define the standards of behaviour for the individuals who participate in it. Also it appears as a sum of the individuals of whom it is composed. It is the relationships between these individuals that are often most crucial in defining whether a character is socially fulfilled or not. For a character to be socially fulfilled there has to be a degree of reciprocity. The individual must actively and with commitment fulfil his/her obligations to society. These obligations involve the individual in a number of different relationships and encompass a number of different, albeit interrelating, roles. It may, however, be possible for the individual to fulfil these without, nonetheless, being fully integrated into society. This will either be because society as a whole fails to appreciate and uphold those standards by which he/she is behaving, or because of the lack of commitment by the other partner in one of the so-called social relationships.



In such cases, we can talk of partial social fulfilment. For there to be social fulfilment in the fullest sense, reciprocity is, however, essential. Thus the direction of the focus in this chapter on forms of social fulfilment will be a double one, concerned both with the behaviour of the individual seeking to achieve such fulfilment and with the nature of the society into which he wishes to be integrated.

The chapter on forms of social non-fulfilment will be concerned not simply with indicating those instances of deviation from the norm in terms of social fulfilment. There will also be an analysis of the way in which the different forms of social non-fulfilment interact, to indicate, for instance, the way in which the failure of one individual to fulfil his social obligations has repercussions beyond himself in causing others to suffer social isolation. It is because of there being such chain reactions linking the different forms of social non-fulfilment that there is little interest in considering the different forms totally in isolation from each.

Chapter four, on forms of personal fulfilment, will indicate those relationships in which an individual can hope to achieve personal happiness. Many of these relationships are based on the amorous love of a man and a woman. This is not, however, the only type of relationship which can exist as a form of personal fulfilment. Other relationships, which might appear to be predominantly of social significance, will also be considered here in terms of their affective value to those involved. From these relationships in particular it will be possible to assess what validity there is in considering any relationship exclusively in either social or personal terms. There being a range of relationships in which

sexual love can find expression - marital and extra-marital - there is likely to be some diversity in the standards by which the characters in the different lais are judged worthy or unworthy of fulfilment in their love.

It is, however, when we come to the forms of personal non-fulfilment that we can expect to find possible the greatest degree of divergence between the different lais. Here we will be considering characters in situations that involve a lack of personal fulfilment, with such fulfilment something that has never been experienced, and also characters who have lost what personal fulfilment they have enjoyed. Between these different situations there will be both similarities and differences in terms of the causes and consequences of the lack/loss of personal fulfilment. These will be measurable in material and physical terms and also - and often more importantly - in emotional terms for those characters involved. The degree of sympathy that the reader is directed to feel for these characters in their lovelessness will depend on the extent to which they are presented as responsible for their own plight or as victims of circumstances.

The final chapter will offer an evaluation of how the different forms of social and personal fulfilment and non-fulfilment interact within the narrative context of the individual lais. Each text will be analysed separately to see whether it is possible to establish its narrative structure purely in terms of the different forms of fulfilment/non-fulfilment and the passage between these different states. If the patterns of interaction between the different forms of fulfilment/non-fulfilment are of any essential significance for an understanding of the lais this will emerge through the extent to

which they are integral to the narrative structure. This significance will lie not only in which is revealed of the importance of the concepts in themselves and in the way in which they are combined to create a balance or imbalance between the social and personal aspects. The image offered in the different lais of either conflict or equilibrium between the demands of society and the personal aspiration of the individual will indicate the significance of the texts in terms beyond those of simply story telling. From this insight provided into the lais themselves it should be possible to derive an insight into the social reality of the period, of which the lais are to an extent a reflection.

The Lais:

Guigemar

Equitan

Fresne

Bisclavret

Lanval

Deus Amanz

Yonec

Laustic

Milun

Chaitivel

Chievrefoil

Eliduc

Ignaure

Haveloc

Aristote

Lai de l'Ombre

Trot

Vair Palefroi

Cort Mantel

Lai du Cor

Narcisus

Piramus et Tisbe

Desiré

Doon

Guingamor

Graelent

Lai de l'Oiselet

Lai du Conseil

Lai de l'Amour

Melion

Lai du Lecheor

Nabaret

Tyolet

Tydorel

L'Espine

Lai de l'Epervier

Introduction: Footnotes

- 1 (p.1) Richard Baum: Recherches sur les oeuvres attribuées à Marie de France.

- 2 (p.1) Ernest Hoepffner: Les Lais de Marie de France.

Jean Frappier: 'Remarques sur la structure du lai, essai de définition et de classement'.

Emanuel J. Mickel Jnr.: Marie de France.

Jean-Charles Payen: 'Le Lai narratif'.

Roger Dubuis: Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles et la tradition de la nouvelle en France au moyen âge.

Philippe Ménard: Les Lais de Marie de France.

## CHAPTER ONE: CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS IN THE LAIS

The purpose of this chapter is to catalogue and to analyse the descriptions of characters that appear in the lais. A full listing of the epithets used with line references to the lais appears in the Appendix.

The descriptions refer to the physical appearance of the characters, to intrinsic personality traits and acquired skills; also to such aspects as social status and wealth. These provide clues to the standards applied in the lais, and help to determine what is required of a character for him or her to be deserving of the reader's sympathy and to be worthy of achieving fulfilment in their aspirations within the context of the lai.

Although many of the same epithets are applied to both male and female characters, there are certain significant differences in usage, and the descriptions of male and female characters are, therefore, considered separately.

### I. Descriptions of Male Characters

In the descriptions of 'good' male characters, we find a range of some forty different adjectives or attributes. Many have a rather vague and general significance, others, however, refer very specifically to one aspect desirable in a knight. These descriptions are mainly applied to the hero of the lai, but some apply to secondary characters and a few are abstract in application referring to the ideal knight.

These are the qualities that establish the merit of a character as a social and/or social being. Some epithets appear very frequently; these appear as the qualities essentially or most conventionally to be found in the heroes of these tales. Others appear only once in the whole collection.

### 1. Physical Appearance

There are references to the physical appearance of male characters in nineteen of the lais, a large enough number to indicate that male beauty was considered of some significance.

Often these references are to be found alongside and complementing references to the personality traits of the characters. This is the case in the introduction to the hero in the Lai d'Amour: -

Et de lui vos voil aconter  
Les biautez, les mors, les proescs;  
Lai d'Amour 12-13.

Equally in the descriptions of the hero in the Lai de l'Espine: -

preu e cortois e forment bel.  
Espine 16.  
ki tant estoit e preus e biax,  
Espine 70

of Graelent: -

Gent ot le cors e franc le cuer,  
Graelent 7

of the young boy in Deus Amanz: -

Ki tant est sages, pruz e beus,  
Deus Amanz 82

of Yonec: -

El regné ne pot hum trover  
Si bel, si pruz ne si vaillant,  
Si large ne si despendant,  
Yonec 462-64.



In Lanval also the hero's physical beauty is referred to in conjunction with his other qualities: -

Pur sa valor, pur sa largesse,  
Pur sa beauté, pur sa pruesce,  
Lanval 21-22.

This is equally the case for the physical beauty of Eliduc: -

Elidus fu curteis e sage,  
Beaus chevaliers e pruz e large.  
Eliduc 271-72.

In none of these descriptions is the physical appearance of the hero particularly stressed, his beauty is simply a conventionally necessary attribute of a hero. The nature of his beauty is not described in detail - no references to the colour of his eyes or his hair, nor to the charm of his smile or the breadth of his brow. His beauty is simply a constituent factor in his well balanced completeness as a man.

In some lais beauty appears as an indication of potential qualities not fully developed yet, as in the case of the young man in Deus Amanz: -

Fiz a un cunte, gent e bel.  
Deus Amanz 58.

And in the case of the young hero of Tyolet at the beginning of the lai: -

du vallet bel e engingnos,  
Tyolet 39.

Tyolet and the young boy in Deus Amanz are, as fine looking young men, apparently destined to join the ranks of successful active knights, albeit a promise never fulfilled in the case of the latter.

In Tydorel, we find a variation on this idea that beauty is an intrinsic part of a man's character and provides an insight into his true character. Tydorel's beauty is foretold by his father before

his birth. Tydorel's father is a being from the Other World, and Tydorel's beauty is exceptional, setting him apart from other men. Tydorel's father says: -

'De moi avrez.I. fiz molt bel,  
sel ferez nomer Tydorel.  
Molt ert vaillanz e molt ert prouz,  
de biauté sormontera touz  
les chevaliers de ceste terre,'

Tydorel 113-17.

This beauty is one indication that Tydorel does not wholly belong to the Real World of mortals, reinforcing the other, more significant feature that makes this clear, his never sleeping. Indeed Tydorel is never completely fulfilled living in the Real World, and ultimately leaves to go to the land of his father, the supernatural being responsible for his extreme beauty and his strange gift.

In both Bisclavret and Yonec the physical appearance of the hero acquires a particular significance in terms of defining his true identity and his relationship with the Real World, this despite there being apparently conventional descriptions of both Bisclavret and Muldamarec as fine knights, combining beauty and good character traits:-

Beaus chevaliers e bons esteit

Bisclavret 17.

Que c'iert li mieudre chevaliers  
E li plus forz e li plus fiers,  
Li plus beaus e li plus amez  
Ki jamés seit el siecle nez.

Yonec 515-18.

Bisclavret may be presented initially as a fine knight, but essential to his character is his metamorphosis into the appearance of a wolf. Through this the relationship between physical appearance and inner character becomes crucial, Bisclavret retaining his humanity despite his bestial appearance. As we shall see, the

divergence between outer semblance and inner reality is of particular importance in other characters in this lai. For Bisclavret himself it is his physical appearance that is nonetheless the determining factor in defining his position in society: he can never fulfil any truly active role in society or be fully integrated in society while his appearance is that of a wolf.

In Yonec, Muldumarec's situation is somewhat different. Muldumarec's first appearance is as a hawk, he then metamorphoses into a conventionally handsome knight: -

Chevaliers bels e genz devint.

Yonec 115.

Here his ability to change forms is an indication of his identity as a supernatural being. It is with the beauty similar to that of any other mortal hero of the lais that he becomes the lady's lover and thereby becomes involved in the Real World, albeit in a limited way. There is no suggestion that his personal qualities are in any way diminished in the times when he takes the appearance of a bird, but to achieve love fulfilment in his relationship with the lady he must have a human appearance.

Thus, we find in Yonec, as in Bisclavret, the indication that a good character is not dependent on handsome features, but that such conventional human beauty does contribute to a man's achieving fulfilment, whether social or personal.

In Melion also the metamorphosis of a man to bestial form is of particular importance. Here, unlike Bisclavret, Melion when in wolf form adopts some of the lifestyle and savagery of a wolf. There is

not the same clearly defined dichotomy between appearance and character as there is in Bisclavret; Melion does, nonetheless, retain some degree of his human identity while appearing to be a wolf. Gauvain comments of him: -

'Cis leus est tous ~~des~~naturés.'  
Entr'aus d'iént tot li baron  
c'ainc si cortois leu ne vit on.  
Melion 430-32.

As with Bisclavret, Melion can achieve true fulfilment only when appearance and character coincide to reveal his human identity.

In three of the lais, physical beauty is listed among those qualities that specifically inspire love, that can thus be seen as contributing, at least potentially, to the fulfilment in love of that character. This is the case in Chaitivel, in which the lady explains her attraction to the four knights: -

'Pur lur beauté, pur lur pruésce,  
Pur lur valor, pur lur largesce,  
Les fis d'amer a mei entendre.'  
Chaitivel 153-55.

Their beauty is also focused upon as being, in a sense, compensatory for their youth and, presumably, their inexperience.

Il n'aveient gueres d'eé,  
Mes mut erent de grant beauté  
Chaitivel 35-36.

This reference to their physical traits is followed by a list of their personal qualities, and there is clearly an accordance between the two aspects. Given the reference to their youth, their physical beauty might have an importance similar to that which it has in Tyolet, as indicative of their potential still to be fully developed.

In Guingamor also the hero's beauty is an important contributory factor in inspiring the love of a woman, in this case that of the Queen.

Bel li sembla de grant mesure  
de cors, de vis et de feture.

Guingamor 45-46.

Por sa biauté, por sa franchise,  
de l'amor de lui ert esprise.

Guingamor 53-54.

It is his beauty that first attracts her to him, but not that alone, her first impression is confirmed by his personal qualities.

Guingamor's beauty also serves in inspiring the king's love for him.

Por sa valor, por sa biauté  
li rois le tint en grant chierté;

Guingamor 13-14.

The only other case of a hero's beauty being referred to specifically as having an impact on his lord is that of Graellent.

Li rois le retint volentiers  
por çou qu'il ert biax chevaliers.

Graelent 13-14.

There is, I believe, nothing particularly significant to be read into this. The focus on Guingamor's beauty, although repeated, is, after all, very slight and accompanied by references to his personal qualities. This applies also to Graellent, and again we find the balance of beauty and inner character: -

Gent ot le cors e franc le cuer,  
Graelent 7.

Thus, the most we can say of both Graellent and Guingamor is that, as in many of the other lais, their physical attractiveness is simply one facet alongside other qualities that serve to single them out as worthy protagonists. What we should note is the similarity between the two situations (Guingamor 13-14; Graelent 13-15) in the context of two very similar stories. Yet there is too much conventionality in these details for them to be in themselves alone the basis of assertions of a direct relationship between the texts. It is, nonetheless, a matter that will be examined further.

In Piramus et Tisbé, the role played by Piramus's beauty is somewhat different, being more specifically linked with his destiny. With the reference to the role of Nature in their creation, it is clear that Piramus and Tisbé are destined to love each other (even though circumstances in fact prevent the fulfilment of their love and therefore cut short the fulfilment of their destiny).

Par grant conseil et par grant cure  
Et par grant .sens les fist Nature,  
Piramus et Tisbé 67-68.

This natural, indomitable compatability between Piramus and Tisbé is symbolised by their equivalence in physical beauty.

D'unes biautez et d'uns samblans;  
L'uns fu vallés, l'autre meschine:  
Plus biaux n'orent rois ne roïne.  
Piramus et Tisbé 6-8.

Coincidentally in none of these three lais, Chaitivel, Guingamor, and Piramus et Tisbé, does the love inspired in such a way achieve the fulfilment aspired to. The context and the nature of the love in each is, however, too different for this to be significant, particularly as in each it is not only physical love in isolation that inspires love, but beauty in conjunction with other factors.

In Narcisus, by contrast, the emphasis is very specifically on the physical beauty of the hero, without there being a balance with equally admirable character traits. The description of Narcisus's beauty is far longer and far more detailed than any other description of male beauty to be found in the lais<sup>1</sup>.

Gens fu de cors, grans par mesure.  
Onques si bele creature  
Ne fu mais ne si gente.  
Nature i mist toute s'entente  
Au deviser et au portraire  
Et a grant painne le pot faire  
Tant com el en ot devisé;  
Car tant i mist de la biauté  
Q'onques ne pot rien porpenser  
K'illoeques ne vausist mostrer.

Primes a fait les eus rians,  
 Simples et vairs, clers et luisans;  
 (Mais, estre tot cou qu'el i fist,  
 Li dius d'amors du sien i mist:  
 Il li asist un dog regart  
 Ki tot le mont esprent e art;)  
 Puis fist le nes et puis le face  
 Clere plus que cristaus ne glace.  
 Les dens fist blances comme nois,  
 Puis les acene trois et trois.  
 Quant ot par li cascun<sup>le</sup> asise,  
 Les levres joint en itel guise  
 C'un poi i laisa d'ouvreture,  
 Tout par raison et par droiture.  
 (Et quant ele ot fete la bouce,  
 Amors une douçor i touce;  
 Femme qui une fois la sent  
 De s'amor alume et esprent.)  
 Après, li forma le menton  
 Et de totes pars environ  
 Li vait polissant a sa main  
 Tant qu'el l'a fait soëf e plain.  
 Clar et luisant fait le sorcil,  
 Le cuir del front tenre et sutil,  
 Caviaus crespés, recerçelés,  
 Qui plus luisent c'ors esmerés.  
 Quant tot ot fait a son creant,  
 Par le viaire li espant  
 Et par le face qu'il ot painte  
 Une color qui pas n'est fainte,  
 Ki ne cange ne ne se muet  
 Tant ne fait bel ne tant ne pleut,  
 Ne se desfait en nule fin;  
 Tés est au soir con au matin,  
 Mesleement blanche et vermeille.  
 Amors meisme s'en merveille  
 Comment ele l'a fait si bien.  
 Tout esgarde, n'i blasme rien;  
 De quanqu'il voit li est avis  
 Que ne puet estre mius assis.  
 Par tel entente et par tel cure  
 Et par tel sens le fist Nature.

Narcisus 61-112.

After such a description there can be no doubt that Narcisus is of  
 extraordinary beauty, that he is beauty personified indeed. Through  
 the rest of the lai, the reader's attention is repeatedly returned  
 to this incredible beauty: -

Si ~~est~~ mout biaux et avenans

Narcisus 114.

si fier, si gent, si bel,

Narcisus 132

and elsewhere. Narcisus's identity is established only in terms of

his beauty, not at all in terms of his inner character, although Dané attempts to read his appearance as the mirror of his soul, making the conventional correlation between physical beauty and a good character. Dané says of Narcissus: -

'Sos ciel n'a home qui ja die  
Qu'il ne soit biaux et sans mesure.  
Nus hom de si bele faiture  
Poroit dunques estre mauvais.  
Tort ai, je nel blasmerai mais.  
Certes, il est et biaux et buens.'

Narcissus 250-55.

Her attempt to establish a link between beauty and character is, however, unjustified in the case of Narcissus, as Dané herself fears it might be. She says: -

'Biaux est! Qui caut s'il n'a bonté?  
Il est, espoir, fel u vilains  
U enuieus, u d'ire plains.'

Narcissus 242-44.

Here it is unequivocally for his beauty that Dané falls in love with Narcissus, not for his beauty in conjunction with other qualities. Narcissus does not possess the goodness that Dané hopes to find in him. Narcissus is only his beauty. Here the beauty of Narcissus is not only deceptive, but fatal also through being excessive. Narcissus lacks the strength of character to support the burden of such beauty. It is because his beauty is excessive and not balanced by personal qualities of character that Narcissus is doomed to non-fulfilment in life, in all senses. It is also the source of Dané's unhappy fate.

Thus, in Narcissus, we find the role played by the beauty of the protagonist is very different from that which it fulfils in the majority of *lais*. Not only does it not contribute to his chances of fulfilment in both personal and social, but it very specifically leads directly to his non-fulfilment.



Narcisus is clearly an exception among the lais in its particular focus upon male beauty and the impact it might have. It is, however, not unique in suggesting that physical beauty can be deceptive and of less value than quality of character.

In the Lai du Conseil, we find another such character whose personality is in opposition to his external beauty. This is the lady's second suitor, about whom she says: -

'Est mout biaux, mes petit est preus'  
Conseil 74

and: -

'Il est de mout lasche corage,  
Mes mout est biaux et acesmanz.'  
Conseil 86-87.

The lady in the Lai du Conseil might be attracted to this suitor for his beauty, but her counsellor asserts that he is certainly not the man worthy of her love; and it is clear, in the context of the lai, that the standards propounded by the counsellor are those to be upheld as wisdom - it is, after all, he and not the handsome but cowardly suitor, who ultimately wins the lady's love.

Thus, here, as in Narcisus, we find a case of physical beauty not being sufficient to make a man worthy of fulfilment in love, although without the focus on the man's beauty being so pronounced and without the consequences of that deceptive beauty being so tragic.

In the Lai de l'Ombre we also find physical beauty being undermined as a significant factor in defining a character's worth as a man. The physical appearance of the hero is of less importance than his personal qualities, although the importance of physical beauty is not totally discounted.

Il ert de cors et ~~biaux~~ et genz  
et frans et legiers et isneaus,  
et si estoit plus preuz que beaus  
et tot ce doit chevaliers estre.

Ombre 108-11.

The knight's beauty is compatible with his inner character, but the significance of that beauty as a facet of his merit is definitely qualified. It is for his character not his beauty that he is to be judged, and this is borne out by the action in the story itself. It is very specifically the knight's behaviour towards the lady that finally wins her love and not his physical appearance.

Conseil and Ombre are among the most self-consciously didactic lais, presenting an image of desirable behaviour in love that can be related to that propounded by Andreas Capellanus in his Tractatus de Amore. A third lai of a similar intention and tone is the Lai du Trot. In this, outward appearance, both purely physical and sartorial, is presented as being particularly revealing of character<sup>2</sup>. There is a lengthy description of the clothes Lorois is wearing when he rides off into the forest at the beginning of the lai: -

Lorois, e molt bien acesmés:  
il ot chemise de cainsil  
vestue, delie e sobtil,  
e s'ot une corioie cainte,  
de pïors ai jo veü mainte.  
Il ne resambloit mie sot,  
car il ot vestu .l. surcot,  
de chiere escarlata sanguine,  
foree d'une pene ermine,  
e si ert bel chauciés assés,  
car il avoit chauciers fretés,  
si avoit chaucés detrañdes  
assés bien seanment chaucies.

Trot 28-40.

It is particularly for the female characters in Trot that outer appearance is endowed with symbolic significance related to true merit, judged in terms of their worthiness to enjoy fulfilment in love. It can, however, be assumed that the description of Lorois's

finery is equally an indication of his refinement and of his worthiness to find such happiness in love. There are references to other qualities possessed by Lorois, but the real emphasis is on his physical appearance. This emphasis on sartorial elegance, in conjunction with the tone of the lai as a whole, would seem to suggest that it is a later work than some of the lais, aimed at an audience of self-conscious sophistication.

Desiré is another lai in which there is a lengthy description of the clothing worn by the hero: -

ben s'est vestuz e aturnez,  
chaussez s'esteit mut richement  
cumé a chevaler apent,  
braiz, chemisé ot de chensil  
plus blans que n'est flur en avril;  
d'un mantel vert ert afublez,  
ses esporuns ad demandez,

Desiré 98-104.

As in the Lai du Trot, the function of this description within the lai is to indicate the intrinsic merit of the protagonist. In Desiré, however, clothing is not imbued with the symbolic significance that it possesses in Trot. As evidence of Desiré's merit, his clothing is of less importance than in Trot. Here it is certainly a contributory factor in creating a favourable 'impression, but no more than a contributory factor, set in balance with other aspects that combine to create his identity. There are also references to Desiré's actual beauty: -

beus fu de cors e de visage.

Desiré 61.

Pruz fu e de mut grant beuté,

Desiré 89.

There are also, we shall see later, indications of his knightly character, which place these descriptions of his physical attractiveness in a more balanced context.

Desiré appears, like Lorois, to be a man of refinement, their clothes described less in terms of functionality than for their attractiveness. They are suited to the leisured lives of these two men, both of whom are shown riding into the forest for pleasure, not to hunt or in quest of adventure, but listening to the birdsong: -

En la forest s'en veut aler  
por le rossegnol escouter

Trot 45-46.

li corages li munte en haut  
grant delit ad d'oïr le chant;

Desiré 122-23.

Their clothes are as revealing as the pursuits themselves of the sort of society to which the protagonists naturally belong. This is a society not of brutal warriors, but of peacetime courtliness, possibly a reflection of the lifestyle, aspired to, if not actually enjoyed by, the audience for whom these lais were intended.

Considering the descriptions of the physical appearance of the male protagonists of the lais, we see that in general the equation is made between physical beauty and inner character. There is a balance between the two aspects as complementary facets of his identity. There is rarely any particular emphasis on his physical appearance, and in some cases it is made specifically clear that it is secondary to the character traits. The lais that stand as exceptions are those in which the physical appearance of an individual is being focused upon and endowed with some significance relevant in some particular way to the lai as a whole, as in Bisclavret, Melion, Yonec and Narcisus.

## 2. Qualities of Character

If physical beauty is conventionally a requisite for the male protagonist of the *lais*, so too are a number of other attributes. Together these constitute his basic identity; they establish his position within the *lai*, indicating to the reader what can be expected of his behaviour, if only in a most general way. The adjectives used in the description of these characters do not refer to one quality only, but combine to present a balanced image of a man with several attributes. The exact balance varies somewhat from *lai* to *lai*, but there is a high degree of conventionality about the attributes referred to, with certain adjectives appearing repeatedly.

Prouesse is the quality to which there is most reference in the *lais*, attributed to characters in twenty-three of the *lais*. Even here in the *lais*, it would seem not to have been totally divorced from the significance it has in the chansons de geste as a quality possessed by the knight as bellator. This emerges most clearly when it is placed in juxtaposition with such terms as hardi, fier, vallant, which refer most specifically to this aspect of the knight as fighter, even if only in tournaments and not on the battlefield<sup>3</sup>.

An instance of this is in the description of Milun's son: -

E cum il est bons chevaliers,  
Tant pruz, si hardize si fiers,  
N'ot en la tere nul meillur,  
De sun pris ne de sa valor.

Milun 297-300.

This description focuses on the young man's skills as an active knight, and it is, indeed, as such that he excels, earning himself the nickname of 'Sanz Per'. It is not, however, simple for his ability on the field of action that he deserves such an accolade. His prowess is set in balance with other qualities: -

Puis ad tant fet par sa pruésce,  
Par sa bunté, par sa largesce,  
Que cil ki nel seivent numer  
L'apeloent partut 'Sanz Per'.

Milun 337-40.

Thus, alongside prowess he possesses goodness and generosity. This is the only example in all the lais in which bunté is referred to specifically as a quality possessed by a male character. With so much emphasis on his chivalric skills, it serves to soften his portrait, to indicate another side to his character, as does largesce. This is a quality frequently referred to, and one of particular social significance. It was part of a knight's role to distribute gifts and money among those less fortunate than himself, and thereby to reveal a disinterest in material wealth for its own sake<sup>4</sup>. Milun's son is, therefore, a good, well-balanced knight, fulfilling his social obligations not only by his excellence as a jousting, but just as importantly in other ways.

This portrait of a protagonist can be compared with that of Melion, in whom prowess holds a similar position within a balance of qualities: -

molt par estoit cortois e prous,  
e amer faisoit a tos;  
molt ert de grant chevalerie  
e de cortoise compaignie.

Melion 7-10.

This conjunction of prouesse and courtoisie is to be found in many of the lais. It is often difficult to assess whether they are presented as a balance of different traits, the one referring to the individual's abilities on the battlefield, the other to his graciousness in the more refined context of a royal court. Possibly the distinction between their meanings is in most cases less pronounced, both having a more general application to indicate the merit of the individual. In this instance, however, there is

specific emphasis on there being two sides to Melion's character that allow him to distinguish himself in the fulfilment of the different social roles of the twelfth-century knight. Melion is praised and appreciated for his ability to excel equally in the field of action and in the refined society of the court.

In the cases of both Melion and Milun's son, this balance of qualities is the basis of their reputation, drawing upon them the love and admiration of society.

Other examples of the coupling of preux and courtois indicate the degree of conventionality in this combination of qualities, the description of the boy in Deus Amanz: -

pruz fu e curteis

Deus Amanz 67

the description of the king's son in Lai de l'Espine: -

preu e cortois

Lai de l'Espine 16

the words of praise addressed to Caradoc after his success in the test of the drinking horn: -

'pruz estes e curtois.'

Cor 560.

The same conjunction of epithets also appears in the description of Eliduc: -

Pruz e curteis, hardi et fier;

Eliduc 6.

The same line appears also in the description of Nabaret: -

pruz e curteis, hardi e fer;

Nabaret 4.

That there should be an identical line in two such very different lais further reinforces the theory that in many cases the epithets that appear in the character descriptions in the lais are applied

simply out of literary convention. It can even be argued for these two particular descriptions in Eliduc and Nabaret that the balance of epithets was determined more by a concern for rhyme and metre than for meaning, surely not unique instances of such a concern asserting itself through the choice of words<sup>5</sup>.

Yet, if adherence to literary convention among the authors of the lais reveals little of the individual authors' standards, it does allow us to draw generalised conclusions as to the standards applied. If it is unclear how much of its knightly significance preu loses in its repeated association with courtois<sup>6</sup>, there remains, nevertheless, some sense that a balance of qualities is desirable in the ideal knight. This appears in its conjunction with other epithets, as in the description of Doon: -

qui molt ~~estoit~~preuz e vaillanz,  
sage e cortois e enprenanz;  
Doon 69-70

and in the description of Guingamor: -

chevalier ert, preuzet senez.  
Guingamor 12.

It is in the Lai de l'Ombre that we find the fullest description of a male protagonist, with a greater number of epithets attributed to the knight than to other characters in the lais, including some epithets used nowhere else in these texts. The full description extends over forty-seven lines (64-111) including the following pointers to his character: -

Proesce et cortoisie l'ot  
eslit a estre sien demainne;  
de la despense qu'il demainne  
se merveillent tuit si acointe.  
Ne trop emparlé ne trop cointe  
nu trovissiez por sa proesce.  
Ombre 64-69.

car il estoit sor toute rien  
et frans et doz et debonnere.  
Ombre 78-79.



estout et ireus et hardi  
quant il avoit l'eaume en son chief.  
Ombre 84-85.

Onques chevalier ne fist Deus  
si preu d'armes comme il estoit.  
Ombre 92-93.

Il ert de cors et biax et genz  
et frans et legiers et isneaus,  
et si estoit plus preuz que beaus  
et tot ce doit chevaliers estre.  
Ombre 108-11.

A number of the terms used - ireus, legiers, doz - are unusual enough in the lais as to be quite free from any accusations of literary conventionality. This, therefore, places greater emphasis on those aspects of the knight's character. The author, Jehan Renart, is clearly at pains here to indicate how complete a character his protagonist is, assertive and valiant as an active knight as well as possessing the sensibility and refinement and sensibility of a courtier. It is interesting that there should be such emphasis on the range of qualities possessed by him in this particular lai, as in the story itself all the focus is on one aspect of his character: as a lover. There is very little action in the lai and we do not, in the course of it, see him either as an active warrior knight or involved in social relationships. Yet, although the lai is primarily concerned with his fulfilment as a lover, his achievements as a knight, as a social being are clearly also of importance by the terms of the lai. This explains the fullness of the description, which firmly establishes his social identity and his worth in chivalric terms, allowing the rest of the text to concentrate on illustrating his worth as a lover.

In Eliduc also we find more lines devoted to the description of the hero than is usual in the lais, although without the range of epithets that we have seen in Ombre. The amount of description in

Eliduc might be partly explained as relating to the length of the lai itself, which is longer than any other of Marie's lais. There is, however, a greater significance to these descriptions.

There is, as we have seen, the initial description: -

Pruz e curteis, hardi ~~et~~ fier;  
Elidus ot nun, ceo m' est vis.  
N'ot si vaillant hume el país!  
Eliduc 6-8.

Later, at the time when he is forced into exile, he is again described: -

Elidus fu curteis e sage,  
Beaus chevaliers e pruz e large.  
Eliduc 271-72.

Once he is living in England there are further descriptions of him, as seen through the eyes of Guilliadun, who says: -

'Tant par est sages e curteis'  
Eliduc 348

of the chamberlain, who says: -

'Li chevaliers n'est pas jolis;  
Jeol tienc a curteis e a sage,  
Que bien seït celer sun curage.'  
Eliduc 422-24

and of those of the King of Exeter, who says: -

'Entre cinc cenȝ nen ad meillur!'  
Eliduc 496.

Later there is yet another description of Eliduc: -

Mut fu preisiez pur sa pruësce,  
Pur sun sen e pur sa largesce.  
Mut li esteit bien avenu!  
Eliduc 547-49.

What is notable in the subsequent descriptions of Eliduc's character is that they add very little to the impression initially created by the first description. The qualities referred to are the same, and always those that are most conventional, his prowess as a knight, his good sense, his generosity, his courtliness. From these

descriptions there is nothing to distinguish Eliduc from any other good hero in any of the other lais. It is surely, indeed, the author's intention in using such obviously conventional terms to establish Eliduc's position among the pantheon of heroes. The repetition of these epithets serves to remind the reader through the course of the lai of Eliduc's qualities, and, thereby, to retain the reader's sympathy for him. This is important for the reading of the lai as a whole, because if Eliduc is described in the terms of a conventional hero, his behaviour is far from conventional by the standards usually applied by Marie in her lais. If his actual behaviour were all that the reader had as a basis for judging Eliduc, it is likely that his sympathy would slant away from Eliduc completely, in favour of Guildeluëc and Guilliadun. Marie, clearly considers her hero worthy of fulfilment through to the end of the lai: he retains her favour, and so she seeks to retain the reader's favour for him also. In this the repeated references to Eliduc's qualities serve an important role.

Marie's favour for Eliduc is not, however, unqualified, and this too is indicated in the descriptions. The initial description is presented impersonally, as expressing the narrator's view of him. The subsequent descriptions, after Eliduc has gone to England, are all expressions of the opinions of him as held by other characters in the lai, opinions that are to an extent biased and misinformed. The fulsome praise he earns from Guilliadun, her father and those at her father's court is not, perhaps wholly endorsed by the narrator and not to be considered wholly merited by the reader; narrator and reader both having greater insight into Eliduc than do the other characters in the lai.

Thus, in Eliduc, very conventional descriptions attain a particular importance in directing the reader's attitude to Eliduc. Yet again the portrait that emerges from these descriptions taken together is of a character with a balance of qualities.

In Ignauze, we find a similar use of descriptions to direct the reader's attitude towards the protagonist. Clearly the reader's sympathies are, to some extent, to be retained throughout the lai; thus, at the time of his murder he is referred to as: -

Le bon chevalier

Ignauze 550

similarly the penultimate reference to him is: -

Ignauzes, li bons vassaus.

Ignauze 622.

These relate to the earliest descriptions of him: -

Ne fu mie de grant hauteche,  
Mais il fist tant, par sa proeche,  
K'il n'avoit, en tout le pais,  
Nul chevalier de si haut pris.

Ignauze 23-26.

Ignauzes, ki ot le cuer gent,

Ignauze 44.

Molt demainne cortoise vie.

Ignauze 56.

These are conventional enough descriptions, with references to his prowess, his courtliness, his worth as a knight. However, already there is introduced an unusual note to his character: -

Molt estoit Ignauze dansiaus!:

Ignauze 64.

This is an epithet applied to no other character in the lais, and, pointing to his libertine nature, an indication surely, that Ignauze, in the eyes of the author, is not a conventional figure. As Marie does in Eliduc, Renaut establishes Ignauze as a hero meriting the reader's sympathy, while being at the same time aware

that Ignaure's behaviour is deviant from conventional standards, as Ignaure, like Eliduc, is unfaithful in love. Ignaure's behaviour is far more extreme as he has twelve mistresses. Renaut balances sympathy for and disapproval of his hero by using the same device as Marie. Having given an initial description of Ignaure in the impersonal narrational voice, he offers subsequent descriptions as opinions of him as held by other characters. Thus the most enthusiastic praise of Ignaure's character is given by the twelve mistresses, and this very clearly at a time when they have only a limited insight into him, before they discover his unfaithfulness (110-14; 131-33; 142-43; 153-55; 171; 173; 194). Among these descriptions of him there twice appears the phrase: -

'flours de barnage'

Ignaure 155; 173.

This points to his excellence as an active knight in the very traditional way of the chansons de geste. It is a term applied to no other character in the *lais*, and it does, therefore, appear here with a certain emphasis, which is surely ironic. Ignaure in his behaviour is far from the austere heroes of the epics, and his being associated with them, however obliquely, takes place only when the truth is not known. There is, indeed, irony in the whole description of Ignaure as perceived by the ladies at this stage.

After the discovery of his unfaithfulness, there is no reference to Ignaure's barnage or to other related qualities. When the ladies are at the pitch of their anger against him, one of them refers to him as: -

'malvais trechiere,'

Ignaure 304.

It is not, however, such an extreme view of Ignaure's character that Renaut intends the reader to have, as is made clear in later

references to him. There may be no further reference to his prowess, but there is plenty of emphasis on other qualities that he possesses and that are the reason for the ladies' persisting love for him. It is the ladies who continue to make reference to his qualities, particularly when they are lamenting over his death with reminiscences of him, an episode that serves through these descriptions as a pendant to the episode of the 'confession' game. The descriptions of him that they offer now have, however, a greater validity, based on their knowledge of the truth and their insight into Ignaure's character (589-91; 593-97; 603-07). The emphasis, on this occasion, is on his physical beauty, with references to his actual character limited to: -

son douch cuer;

Ignaure 597

and, in general, to the pleasure afforded by his company: -

Toutes plaignoient son delit:

Ignaure 607.

These provide a just portrait of Ignaure, as a somewhat frivolous man, not wholly to be approved of or disapproved of, a portrait that coincides well with his behaviour.

Renaut has found it more difficult than Marie in Eliduc in establishing a balance in his feelings for Ignaure and in those feelings he wishes to elicit from his readers. The final image of Ignaure is unusual, not only in the qualities it highlights, but also in there being such emphasis on only one aspect of the man's character. He lacks the balance of qualities that is ideal.

In Haveloc and Tyolet, a conventional balance of qualities is upheld as the ideal; the composition of that balance is of qualities of two different types, with a somewhat particular distinction between the

two, determined by the nature of the experiences of the two heroes. This distinction is between those qualities that are natural and instinctive to the heroes and those qualities that can only develop as a result of training and of involvement in the society to which they are most suited.

Haveloc is the son of the good and rightful King of Denmark, it is, therefore, Haveloc's just and natural destiny to succeed his father in this role. To fulfil this role satisfactorily Haveloc needs to possess certain qualities, some of these develop naturally in him, even when he has no awareness of his true identity, and to such an extent that they impress King Edelsi: -

Un deus le rei le retint  
Pur co ke fort le vit e grant  
E mult le vit de bel semblant.

Haveloc 244-46.

Tant esteit francs e debonere  
K'a tuz voleit lur pleisir fere.

Haveloc 255-56.

Haveloc's natural brute strength is much stressed in the lai, yet even at an early stage, before he has started his return to his rightful role in society, he possesses gentler qualities of character that distinguish him from simply being an oaf. He already possesses a balance of qualities that is the basis for his development from scullion to king, qualities that are extended and refined through his contact with noble society.

In Tyolet the distinction is established more clearly still between those qualities that indicate initially his worthiness to be integrated into knightly society and those qualities that have to be developed before such social integration is possible. As with Haveloc, Tyolet's birth is made clear as an indication of the social

status to which he is naturally destined: -

Une dame sa mere estoit

Tyolet 49.

.I. chevalier ot a seignor

Tyolet 51.

Yet, growing up in isolation from knightly society Tyolet is not trained in the skills and refinements of an active courtly knight. He does, however, possess the qualities that are a basis for such a training<sup>7</sup>.

du vallet bel e engingnos,  
hardi e fier e coragos.

Tyolet 39-40.

It is as a result of his encounter with the stag/knight that Tyolet becomes aware of those other qualities that he should acquire. The stag/knight asks him: -

'Seroies tu preuz e hardi?'

Tyolet 221.

In response to this encounter Tyolet decides what specific skills it is desirable for him to learn in order to participate in chivalric society. He says: -

'Sens voil aprendre e cortoisie,  
savoir voil de chevalerie,  
a tornoier e ajoster,  
a despandre, e a donner.'

Tyolet 303-06.

It is motivated by this appreciation of the skills of chivalry that Tyolet goes to Arthur's court where he is welcomed and enabled to become a knight.

From Haveloc and Tyolet it clearly emerges that for a man to achieve fulfilment as a knight he must possess a balance of qualities that are inborn in him and qualities that are developed through contact with knightly society. This combination of high birth and training is particularly focused upon in these two lais. It is, nonetheless, a feature of protagonists in other lais also.



### 3. Other Aspects

In some of these lais the high birth of the hero is specifically, if not emphatically, referred to, as in Lanval, in which there are two references to Lanval's being the son of a king. The first appears at the beginning of the lai, at the time when he has been overlooked by Arthur in the distribution of rewards.

Fiz a rei fu, de haut parage,  
Lanval 27.

This, in conjunction with the description of his personal qualities, is clearly intended as an indication of Lanval's intrinsic merit. This is even more obvious in the case of the second reference to his family background. This is made by Gauvain, who is specifically stressing Lanval's worth in a social context. Gauvain says: -

'Par Deu, seignurs, nus felmes mal  
De nostre cumpainun Lanval,  
Ki tant est larges e curteis  
E sis peres est riches reis,  
Qu'ad nus ne l'avun amené.'

Lanval 229-33.

The other of Marie's lais in which there is a reference to the high birth of an individual is, as we have seen, Deus Amanz, in which the boy is described as: -

Fiz a un cunte, gent e bel.  
Deus Amanz 58.

He is a young man too young even to have been knighted or to have established his worth in his own right. This reference to his noble birth indicates that knightly qualities are inherent in him by virtue of his background, just as in Tyolet.

In the Lai de l'Espine, the hero is the son of a king (27); in the Lai d'Amour, the hero is of high birth in a general way: -

Hauz en lignage,  
Lai d'Amour 15.

as is Graelent: -

gentix e bien emparentés.

Graelent 6.

Although the number of lais in which there are such specific references to the noble or royal lineage of the heroes is small, it is possible to make the assumption that the other heroes of the lais share such elevated family backgrounds. The image of society presented in the lais is a restricted one, as we shall see fully in the next chapter, a society of royal courts, noble households, of knights and kings. The high birth of the heroes of the lais can be seen as an essential aspect of their identity as idealised beings, reflecting a trend of class-consciousness among the nobles of the time for whom this literature was surely intended. As the political and economic superiority of the aristocracy was being undermined by the rise of a cash wealthy class, the notion of nobility in itself acquired a new status, indicative of an inborn superiority of a kind unattainable through money alone<sup>8</sup>. It is with an awareness of social reality beyond the literature, that we can appreciate the references to the high birth of the heroes (and heroines) of the lais as not simply a statement of fact, but also a value judgment.

The point of the intrinsic superiority of the nobility over other classes is made to some extent in Graelent. Graelent is indignant at the fairy's suggestion that he is stealing her clothes in order to sell them. He protests against the implications of this accusation: -

'Ne sui pas fix a marceant  
n'a bourgeois, por vendre mantiax;

Graelent 240-41.

The scorn of the noble for the bourgeois is obvious in this.

It is, however, in the Lai de l'Oiselet that the intrinsic value of noble birth is most forcibly stressed. It is in this lai only that a main character appears who is clearly not of such a background, but is by birth a villain. He cannot be considered alongside the heroes of the other lais because he is totally lacking in the intrinsic qualities of character that they naturally possess. The whole point of the lai is, indeed, to demonstrate that however much he might aspire to be integrated into the elite of society this will never be possible because of his birth. It is because of his lowliness of birth that had determined his materialistic character from which he cannot escape<sup>9</sup>.

The bird, which is the author's mouthpiece, is described: -

Li oisiaus fu merveilles genz,  
Oiselet 65.

It pronounces on which standards are to be upheld as being favoured by God: -

'Dieus aime et honor et bonté,  
Et amors aime leauté.'  
Oiselet 147-48.

'Mes sens, cortoisie et honor  
Et leauté maintient amor,  
Et se vous a ce vous tenez,  
Dieu et le siecle avoir poez.'  
Oiselet 153-56.

These are not attributes possessed by the villain, whose claims to live the lifestyle of a knight - living in a knight's castle, enjoying the leisure pursuits of a knight - are based solely on his wealth.

Qu'il ~~est~~ <sup>est</sup> uns riches vilains,  
De son non ne sui pas certains,  
Mes riches ert de grant maniere,  
De prez, de bois et de riviere,  
Et de quan qu'afiert a riche homme,  
Oiselet 3-7.

Such wealth, without noble birth and without the chivalric qualities

associated with and derived from noble birth, is not enough to make a man a worthy hero by the standards of the lais; it does not render him deserving of fulfilment by those standards.

This is not, however, to say that wealth is necessarily a negative feature for a character; it is, after all, a degree of wealth that enables an individual to be generous, an important trait in a hero. The position of wealth within the list of attributes that a character might possess is an ambivalent one, similar to that of beauty. In some of the lais it is included as a desirable attribute for the hero, as in Trot, in which Lorois is described as: -

.I. molt riche chevalier

Trot 7

and in the Lai d'Amour, in which the hero is said to be: -

hauz en richescs,

Amour 14.

In neither lai is the wealth of the protagonist particularly stressed, and in both it is firmly placed within a context that places as much emphasis on his personal qualities.

Wealth, or at least great wealth, is certainly not a necessary requisite for the protagonist of a lai, Guillaume, in the Vair Palefroi, is very specifically poor, and also very specifically a good character:-

Riches de cuer, povres d'avoir,

Vair Palefroi 37.

The distinction between wealth and qualities of character is here very firmly established.

We can look also at Milun, in which the lady's husband is described as: -

Un mut riche humme del païs,  
Milun 125.

He is placed in contrast with the hero of the lai, Milun, who is clearly not nearly as wealthy, but far more worthy as a character.

Thus wealth is sometimes a feature contributing to the balanced portrait of a hero in the lais, but is far from being necessary for such an equilibrium, and in the great majority of the lais there is no direct reference to the wealth of the hero. In some of the lais, the wealth of the protagonist can be assumed through the reference to his largesse, the focus being on his disinterested attitude to wealth, in contrast to the acquisitiveness of the vilain in the Lai de l'Oiselet.

What emerges primarily from this study of the descriptions of the male characters of the lais is the importance of balance of traits. The balance is above all between those qualities necessary for a knight to excel on the battlefield or, more often, in tournaments, and those that will allow him to distinguish himself in refined court society. He will possess qualities derived from noble birth, knightly skills in which he has been trained; physically attractive, he may or may not be wealthy. These are the qualities that lead directly to his fulfilling himself as an active knight and as a vassal and lord. Repeatedly we are told that these are the qualities that earn him the love and respect of society generally, and the appreciation of his overlord. In possession of such qualities, the hero is deserving of social fulfilment<sup>10</sup>; this is not, however, to say that he always achieves such fulfilment.

These are also the qualities that impress the ladies in the lais,

and that inspire them to love the heroes. Thus, the same qualities that lead a man to social fulfilment can equally lead him to fulfilment in love, with the same qualification that such personal fulfilment is not always achieved, however merited it might be.

## II. Description of Female Characters

The number of different epithets applied to female characters in the *lais* is smaller than that for men. This relates directly to the narrower range of activities open to women in society. The role that they were expected to fulfil in society was far more restricted and restrictive, as is reflected in the *lais*, not only in the number of attributes applied to them, but also in the type of attributes.

As for the descriptions of male characters, the majority of descriptions relate to the female protagonists, although some apply to secondary characters, such as the Queen in Guingamor (40), the lady's handmaiden in Desiré (137-40).

### 1. Physical Appearance

Physical beauty is endowed with greater importance for the female characters than for male characters<sup>11</sup>. In only four of the *lais* is there no reference to feminine beauty - Laustic, Chievrefoil, Conseil and Oiselet, and in the last of these there is, in any case, no female character. A number of the references to feminine beauty are brief and conventional. The king's daughter in Deus Amanz and the lady in Milun are both described as: -

une fille bele

Deus Amanz 21  
Milun 23

similarly Argentille: -

uns sule fille bele,

Haveloc 211.

The lady in Yonec is referred to as:-

bele e gente,

Yonec 25

as is the wife in Nabaret (7).

There are, however, also many other ladies in the *lais* whose beauty is not simply referred to but is indicated with particular emphasis. There is, for example, Alixandre's mistress, who as well as being referred to in general terms as:

La bele, la blonde

Aristote 277

and

Cele qui Nature avoit peinte;

Aristote 297

is described at some length: -

Bien li ot Nature florē  
Son cler vis de lis et de rose.  
En tote sa taille n'ot chose  
Qui par droit estre n'i deüst;  
Ne ne cuidiez pas qu'ele eüst  
Ne guimple loïe ne bende;  
Si l'enbelist molt et amende  
Sa bele tresce longue et blonde;  
N'a pas deservi c'on la tonde  
La dame qui si biax chief porte.

Aristote 286-95.

The aspects of her beauty to which attention is drawn are typical of such descriptions of female beauty that appear in the *lais*, as in the description of the lady in Lanval<sup>12</sup>, as she first appears: -

Flur de lis e rose nuvele,  
Quant ele pert al tens d'esté,  
Trespasot ele de beauté.

Lanval 94-96.

Mut ot le cors bien fait et gent!

Lanval 100.

Le vis, le col e la peitrine:  
Plus ert blanche que flur d'espine!

Lanval 105-06

and again when she comes to court at the end of the lai: -

En tut le siecle n'ot plus bele!  
Lanval 550.

Ele iert vestue en itel guise  
De chainse blanc e de chemise  
Qui tuit li costé li pareient,  
Ki de deus parz lacié esteient.  
Le cors ot gent, basse la hanche,  
Le col plus blanc que neif sur branche;  
Les oilz ot vairs e blanc le vis,  
Bele buche, neis bien asis,  
Les surcilz bruns e bel le frunt,  
E le chief cresp e aukes blunt:  
Fils d'or ne gette tel leur  
Cum si chevel cuntre le jur!

Lanval 559-70.

Just how conventional these descriptions of female physical appearance are emerges must forcibly if we look at the descriptions of the heroines in three further lais.

In Graelent, she is seen first by the hero when she is bathing.

tant la vist graisle e escavie,  
blanc<sup>e</sup> e gente e colorie,  
les ex rians e bel le front;  
il n'a si bele en tot le mont.  
Graelent 219-22.

As in Lanval, there is a second description of her at the end of the lai: -

Mout ert bele de grant maniere,  
a dox sanblant, o simple ciere,  
biax ex, biax vis, bele façon,  
Graelent 593-95.

D'une porpre toute vermeille  
a or brodee estroitement,  
estoit vestue ricement;  
ses mantiax valoit .I. castel.  
Graelent 598-601.

In Guingamor also the heroine is bathing when first seen by the hero and described: -

Biaus membres ot, et lons et plains,  
el siecle n'a tant bele chose,  
ne fleur de liz, ne flor de rose,  
comme cele qui estoit nue.  
Guingamor 430-33.



In Desiré the first description of the heroine is given by her handmaiden, who says: -

'Jo sui od une damaisele,  
el secle n'at nule si bele.'

Desiré 155-56.

'Veistes vus unk si bel vis,  
si beles meins, ne si beus braz,  
ne si gent cors vestu a laz,  
plus beus chevoils ne plus dulce  
plus assemez ne meuz treciez?'

Desiré 188-92.

This is followed by a second description at the end of the lai:-

une mut riche damaisele  
ensemblé od une pucele.  
Vestues furent richement,  
lur dras valent cent marz d'argent;

Desiré 683-86.

Beles esteient sanz mesure  
de cors, de vis et de feiture.

Desiré 691-92.

These descriptions are probably of less interest for their particular details than for the fact of their similarity. Such is the conventionality of these descriptions that it must have been instantly clear to the contemporary reader that these ladies were the personification of ideal feminine beauty. The concept of ideal female appearance clearly extends also to the beautiful clothes of precious materials. What is interesting also is the length of each of these descriptions which focus on this aspect of the female characters. They are comparable with the description of Narcissus (Narcissus 61-112). but there is no suggestion that their beauty is excessive or in any way undesirable<sup>13</sup>. Rather the peerlessness of the beauty of these ladies is stressed in each of the four of these lais, in almost identical terms:-

En tut le siecle n'ot plus bele!

Lanval 550.

il n'a si bele en tot le mont.

Graelent 222.

el siecle n'a tant bele chose,  
Guingamor 431.

el secle n'at nule si bele.  
Desire 156.

There can surely be no doubt that these lines are self-consciously and deliberately conventional<sup>14</sup>. The author of Desire goes so far as to use it again in the description of an attendant with the lady, which is almost a direct echo of lines 155-56: -

Od eles ot un damaisel,  
en tut le ceclle n'ot si bel.  
Desire 693-94.

The intention is evidently to present these ladies as exquisite beyond question. In two of the lais, Lanval and Graelent, the story is dependent on the beauty of the heroine being greater than that of the Queen, who is generally acknowledged to be the most beautiful woman, hence the emphasis on the exceptional beauty of the heroines. The importance of focusing on the beauty of the heroines is, however, equally important to all four lais, as they are all part of the same tradition whereby the beauty of fairies is greater than that of any mortal. This tradition is indicated in the description of the lady in another of the lais, Guigemar: -

Ki de beuté resemble fee.  
Guigemar 704.

This is specifically to stress just how very beautiful she is. Thus the descriptions of the heroines of Lanval, Graelent, Desire and Guingamor, with their emphasis on their beauty and the richness of their clothing serve to identify them as fairies. This identification is reinforced by the circumstances of the original encounter with the hero, by their general behaviour and by their clearly not belonging to the courtly society of the Real World.

This particular focus on their incredible beauty points also to their superiority in comparison with less beautiful mortal ladies.

This concept of the moral superiority of a female character being specifically expressed through her physical appearance is central to the Lai du Trot. The virtue of the eighty 'good' ladies is assessed in terms of their positive attitude to love and is indicated outwardly by their beauty and the finery of their apparel: -

duisc'a .IIII.XX. damoiseles,  
ki cortoisies furent e beles,  
s'estoient molt bien acesmees,  
totes estoient desfublees,  
ensi sans moelekins estoient,  
mais capeaus de roses avoient  
en lor chiës mis, e d'aiglentier,  
por le plus doucement flairier.  
Totes estoient en bl'iaus  
sengles, por le tans ki ert chaus.  
S'en i ot de tates assez  
ki orent estrains les costës  
de çaintures; s'en i ot maintes  
que por le chaut erent desçaintes;  
e si orent por miex seïr  
lor treces fait defors issir  
de lor ceveus, ki sor l'oreille  
pendent, les la face vermeille.

Trot 79-96.

Their beauty and consequently their virtue is emphasised through contrast with the eighty 'bad' ladies who have shown no willingness to love and who are punished now by wearing only rags.

Cascune sans estrief seoit,  
e si n'orent solliers ne chaucës,  
ains estoient totes deschaucës.  
Les piës orent mal atornës,  
car eles les orent crevés,  
e de noir fros erent vestues,  
si avoient les ganbes nues  
duisc'as genols, e tos les bras  
avoient desnues des dras  
duisc'as coutes molt laidement;

Trot 176-85.

Such emphasis as we find in the Trot on the relationship between physical appearance and virtue is exceptional. It coincides, nonetheless, with the tradition generally upheld in the lais of

equating beauty with qualities of character. We have seen that this applies generally to the male characters of the *lais*; it applies more consistently still for the female characters.

There are, however, two exceptions, in which the beauty of the female protagonist is deceptive. This is the case in Equitan. The faithless wife of the good seneschal is described with a degree of emphasis on her physical beauty: -

La dame ert bele durement  
E de mut bon affeitement.  
Gent cors out e bele faiture,  
En li former uvrat Nature;  
Les oilz out veirs e bel le vis,  
Bel buche, neis bien asis:  
El réaume n'aveit sa per!

Equitan 31-37.

This description is apparently conventional and can be related to those of the heroines of Aristote, Lanval, Graelent, Desiré, Guingamor and others. It is, however, alone among the descriptions of main female characters in Marie's *lais* in not including reference also to her qualities of character. The fairy mistress in *Lanval*, for instance, is referred to as: -

pruz e sage

Lanval 72.

Other authors of the *lais* may pay little attention to the details of their character descriptions, but Marie would appear to use her descriptions to particular effect. It would seem, therefore, that there is no coincidence in there being no positive qualities attributed to the lady in Equitan in the impersonal narrator's voice. The reference to her possessing any such qualities is based on *Equitan*'s impassioned perception of her, and in the context of *Equitan*'s own less than commendable behaviour it is not to be assumed as an accurate and well-judged description.

Mut la trova curteise e sage,  
Equitan 51.

Marie would seem to be using description, as in Eliduc, to direct the response of the reader to her characters. The seneschal's wife possesses no good qualities by Marie's standards and, therefore deserves neither the sympathy of the reader, nor to achieve fulfilment in her ambitions<sup>15</sup>.

The wife in Melion can be regarded in much the same way. She is described only in terms of her beauty and her high birth: -

Gent cors e bele espauleüre,  
s'ot blonde la cheveüre,  
petite bouche bien mollee  
e comme rose encolorée,  
les ex ot vairs, clers e rians,  
molt estoit bele en tos samblans;  
Melion 91-96.

Her high birth is something she asserts herself in introducing herself to Melion: -

'je sui assez de haut parage  
e nee de gentil lignage.'  
Melion 107-08.

High birth is, like beauty, generally a feature of the heroines of the lais, as it is of the heroes. Like beauty, however, it is a basis for and indication of good character, but not specifically in itself an aspect of good character. There is no reference to Melion's wife possessing any desirable qualities of character, and certainly none are revealed through her behaviour. It would seem likely, then, that the author of Melion is here using description in the same way as Marie to provide an initial clue to the negative character of the lady.

## 2. Qualities of Character

Equitan and Melion are, nonetheless, exceptions in not making the equation between physical appearance and personal qualities. Although the focus on the physical beauty of the female characters is far greater than for the male characters, it is not the only aspect of importance in the presentation of the female characters in the *lais*. As in the descriptions of the male characters, it is desirable that there should be a balance of qualities. Some of the qualities attributed to the female characters are the same as those attributed to the male characters. Those most commonly referred to are courtoisie and sagesse: she should be wise as well as gracious. She should also be preuz, a term which in such cases cannot be endowed with any sense of military valor, but is applied in a very general sense as an indication of the lady's worth. It also places her in a relationship of equivalence with the hero of the *lai*<sup>16</sup>.

It is in the Lai de l'Ombre that we find the widest range of qualities attributed to a female character. The lady is described as:-

la preuz, cortoise,  
Ombre 315.

la gentil, la debonnere,  
Ombre 338.

qu'ele estoit molt cortoise et sage.  
Ombre 341.

sa biauté les fet trespenser  
Ombre 324.

Jehan Renart clearly felt it to be particularly important to establish his heroine, as well as his hero, as a fully rounded character, possessing a balance of qualities. He is, however, not alone among the authors of the *lais* in presenting his heroine in terms of a range of different attributes. That there should be such

a balance of qualities in the heroine of a lai appears in other texts.

Thus Guildeluec is described: -

Ki mut est bele, sage e pruz.  
Eliduc 710.

Fresne is described: -

En Bretagne ne fu si bele  
Ne tant curteise dameisele;  
Franche esteit e de bone escole,  
E en semblant e en parole,  
Fresne 237-40

and as: -

Mut la vit bele e enseignee,  
Sage, curteise e afeitiee.  
Fresne 253-54

the lady in Yonec: -

De haute gent fu la pucele,  
Sage, curteise e forment bele,  
Yonec 21-22.

Other similar descriptions, combining a variety of attributes, are to be found applied to other heroine throughout the lais, as can be seen from the tables in the Appendix.

In Chaitivel, although there is a number of references to the qualities possessed by the lady it is possible that they do not create a balance. She is described as: -

Une dame ki mut valeit  
De beauté e d'enseignement  
E de tut bon affeitement,  
Chaitivel 10-12.

Ki tant fu requise d'amer  
Pur sa beauté, pur sa valur,  
Chaitivel 30-31.

La dame fu de mut grant sens:  
Chaitivel 49.

She is not unique in being described in terms of her good sense and as a well educated woman. Such aspects are to be found also in the descriptions of Fresne (239;253), who appears as one of the Marie's most sympathetic characters, exemplary in her behaviour and character. But, whereas Fresne is described as possessing a number of other qualities, the descriptions of the lady in Chaitivel refer only to her beauty, her intellect and her good education. There is no suggestion of her possessing other, softer qualities, any generosity of heart, and, indeed, her behaviour towards her four suitors would suggest that she is totally dominated by the concept of rationality, without any true regard for emotions.

Thus, although many of the descriptions of female characters in the *lais* may be highly conventional in terms of the actual epithets employed, they are, on occasion, used quite consciously and for a specific purpose in directing the reader's attitude to a character.

### 3. Other Aspects

It is possible to point to those features that generally combine to present a conventional, if ideal, portrait of the heroine of a *lai*. She is beautiful, courtly, wise, and is likely to possess a number of other personal qualities; she is also of high birth, and, most desirably, an heiress. The emphasis on the elevated lineage of the heroines in the *lais* is somewhat greater than for the male protagonists. This is probably in part due to there being a narrower range of standards by which a woman can be assessed. Her birth and her family background therefore acquire a relatively greater importance as an indication of her intrinsic value, with the Irish princess in Melion as an exception. It is also, more



importantly, a reflection of the social reality of the period. Women were pawns in the game of marriage, which was a highly serious game of political and economic importance. At a time when only the first born inherited his father's lands and wealth, younger sons regarded an heiress as the most valuable pawn of all in this marriage game<sup>17</sup>. This explains the apparent desirability of the princess in Melion as a bride, and equally that of the lady in Doon,

Le pais ot en heritage,

Doon 11

also that of the young girl in Deus Amanz, who is the King of Pistre's only daughter: -

Li reis ot une fille bele  
E mut curteise dameisele.  
Fiz ne fille fors li n'aveit;

Deus Amanz 21-23.

It is in Narcisus that there is the most emphasis on the high birth of the heroine and on the implications of this. Dané is extremely conscious that as the daughter of a king her behaviour should be exemplary. Repeatedly throughout the lai she reaffirms this fact about herself as essential to her identity. It is in such terms that she presents herself to Narcisus; she says: -

'Sui fille ton seignor le roi.'

Narcisus 474.

More revealing still of the significance that her high birth has for Dané is her reiteration of this fact in her monologues, which indicates the intensity with which she clings to this notion to retain a sense of honour and of identity, seeking within the fact of her birth the direction for her behaviour. Thus she says to herself: -

'Fille [e]s de roïne et de roi.'

Narcisus 269.

'Ses tu que soies fille a roi?'

Narcisus 385.

'Qui sui je donc? Qui est mes pere?  
Li rois est. Ore et qui ma mere?  
Donc ne ses tu qui? La roïne!'

Narcisus 599-605.

Unlike all the other lais, and deserving, in consequence, to be considered apart from them, is the Lai du Lacheor, which as a parody of the ideals of the lais, attributes to its female characters a full range of those qualities considered most desirable in the heroines. They are described as: -

les plus nobles e les plus beles  
du pais, dames e puceles,  
qui dont estoient el pais;  
n'i avoit dame de nul pris  
qui n'i venist a icel jor;  
molt estoient de riche ator.

Lacheor 5-10

and as: -

sages erent e ensaingnies,  
franches, cortoises e proisies:  
c'estoit de Bretaingne la flors  
e la proesce e la valors.

Lacheor 55-58.

From such descriptions one could not hope for more perfect women than these by the standards generally applied in the lais. The reality of their attitudes and behaviour in the composition of their lai is a complete reversal of this ideal. The author is, nonetheless, completely aware of the values traditionally upheld in the lais, as is evidenced in the description of the ladies and in the way he exploits these values as the basis of his parody.

The character description is an integral part of the lai, however brief or lengthy, conventional or particularised. This is the most basic point to emerge from a study of these descriptions. There are descriptions of the heroes and/or heroines in all the lais except one. This exception is Chievrefoil, and the absence of description in this particular lai is perhaps just as revealing about the role

of the character description as any of the actual descriptions that appear in the other lais. The hero and heroine in Chievrefoil are Tristan and Iseut. That there should be no description of them is an indication of how familiar the Tristan legend was to a contemporary audience. Marie gives no description of her protagonists, because she has no need to: their merits are already well established by tradition. She does not need to define their personal qualities in order to indicate the extent to which they deserve fulfilment in their love for each other, or to arouse sympathy for the tragedy of the non-fulfilment of that love.

By extension, it is, then, possible to say that where there are descriptions of the characters it is because there is a need to establish their worth within the context of the lai. These descriptions serve primarily to indicate the standards of character and behaviour applied within the lai, and to indicate the extent to which the characters measure up to those standards. The descriptions serve, therefore, as a shorthand way for the author to show his/her feelings for the characters, and thereby to direct the reader's response to them. It is interesting to see to what extent the actual behaviour of those characters relates, or fails to relate, to the character descriptions given; also to what extent the situations in which the characters find themselves are determined and controlled by the qualities with which they are endowed.

That the qualities of character possessed by a protagonist do often directly affect his/her relationships with others is evidenced by the references to a character's being amé, proisié, cheri. These references have been included in the tables in the Appendix, because, although they are not indications of specific qualities

possessed, they do serve a similar role as a form of shorthand directing the reader's attitude to the character. It is often made clear that a character deserves to be loved or respected because of the qualities he/she possesses. In these cases the qualities of the individual are shown to have a direct impact on his/her fulfilment within relationships with others, which can be of social and/or social significance.

Thus in Milun, it is for the same qualities, for the same exploits as an active knight that Milun arouses both the respect of society and the love of the lady: -

Pur sa pruësce iert mut amez  
E de muz princes honurez.

Milun 19-20.

Ele ot o'i Milun nomer,  
Mut le cumençat a amer.

Milun 25-26.

Equally Eliduc's exploits on the battlefield earn him both the appreciation of the King and the love of Guilliadun.

In both cases, therefore, the same personal qualities of the hero are the basis for both personal and social fulfilment. This can also apply to a female character, as in the case with Fresne. Her virtues arouse the love of Gurun in particular and of society in general: -

Li chevaliers ki l'amena  
Mut la cheri e mut l'ama,  
E tuit si humme e si servant;  
N'i out un sul, petit ne grant,  
Pur sa franchise ne l'amast  
E ne cherist e honurast.

Fresne 307-12.

Often, however, the relationship between the qualities of character possessed by the protagonist and his/her fulfilment in both social and personal terms is far more complex. This is to a large extent

the basis for the examination of forms of fulfilment and non-fulfilment in the following chapters.

The standards established through the character descriptions are, we have seen, often the same ones, with the same attributes to be found applied repeatedly to the protagonists of the different *lais*. Even when there are differences in the particular attributes, the importance of a balance of qualities is made clear. High birth, physical beauty, qualities of courtly refinement and, for men, qualities of military prowess are all attributes that contribute to that balance, at least in the majority of the *lais*.

It is perhaps worth noting that although the qualities possessed by a character have an impact on both social and personal relationships, many of them are primarily of a social nature. This is true even in those *lais* in which the focus is almost exclusively on the amorous relationship(s) of the protagonists, with little reference to their participation in society in the course of the story itself. This is true of such *lais* as Conseil, Ignauire, Ombre. This is an indication that even an individual portrayed as a lover within the actual narrative must nonetheless be recognised as existing within a social context and as worthy of social integration as well as fulfilment in love.

What is possibly surprising is the absence of specifically Christian qualities. Given the importance of the Church in the twelfth and thirteenth century society, one might easily have assumed to find Christian piety as contributing to the balance of attributes making up an individual's character. Nowhere in the *lais* do we find a character described in terms of being a good or pious Christian,

even as conventionalised lip service to the Church, this despite the fact that the majority of the authors of the *lais* must have been either clerics themselves or at least educated by clerics.

The total absence of such terms applied to the characters of the *lais* must be related to the way in which love is portrayed in many of them. When the love relationships featured between the hero and heroine are not adulterous they are, nonetheless, in most cases, extra-marital, and such relationships would have been severely criticised as immoral by the Church.

Indeed, the one *lai* to pronounce itself on the need to respect God is the one least concerned with love between men and women. This is the Lai de l'Oiselet, in which the bird, as the mouthpiece of the author, says: -

'Vous devez Dieu amer avant,  
Tenir la loi et son comant,  
Volentiers aler au moustier,  
Et si escoutez le mestier;  
Quar du service Dieu oïr  
Ne vus puet il nus maus venir,  
Et par verité vous recort  
Dieus et amors sont d'un acort.'

Oiselet 133-40.

The other authors of the *lais* who introduce a Christian element to their works appear to do so with a certain unease, aware that they are attempting to reconcile two irreconcilables: Christian morality and extra-marital love. This is particularly the case in Desiré, in which *Desiré* has moral scruples about his relationship with the fairy. In his visits to the hermit he is shown to be an active Christian, although not specifically referred to as such. In his sense of guilt about his love affair with the fairy, *Desiré* expresses the traditional Church attitude to such relationships (Desiré 277-90). This is not, however, the view that the author

wishes to propound in the lai, and, through the character of the fairy mistress, he seeks to justify the extra-marital relationship with reference to Christian morality, as will be considered in detail subsequently. The fairy is, like Desiré, shown to be a practising Christian, going to church and asking for a church blessing for her marriage to Desiré. It is, however, unlikely that her understanding of Christian morality, as expressed in her defence of her relationship with Desiré (Desiré 373-78) would have been acceptable to the churchmen of the time.

Marie de France also makes some attempt at introducing a Christian dimension to a love story. This she does in two of her lais, Yonec and Eliduc. In Yonec the introduction of a Christian element is specifically to indicate that a being from the Other World is not necessarily evil by the standards of the Real World or anti-Christian. Thus, Muldumarec, in order to persuade the lady that he would be suitable as a lover, takes Holy Communion. It is Muldumarec who, of all the characters in the lais, is the one to express his Christian beliefs most explicitly. He says: -

'Ne vodreie pur nule rien  
Que de mei i ait acheisun,  
Mescreauncë u suspesun.  
Jeo crei mut bien el Creatur,  
Ki nus geta de la tristur  
U Adam nus mist, nostre pere,  
Par le mors de la punme amere;  
Il est e ert e fu tuz jurs  
Vie e lumiere as pecheurs.  
Si vus de ceo ne me creez,  
Vostre chapelain demandez,  
Dites ke mals vus a surprise,  
Si volez avoir le servise  
Que Deus ad el mund establi,  
Dunt li pecheur sunt gari.  
La semblance de vus prendrai,  
Le cors Damedeu recevrai,  
Ma creance vus dirai tute:  
Ja mar de ceo serez en dute!'

Yonec 146-64.

This Christian sensibility appears, however, to have no further impact upon Muldumarec or the lady in the course of their relationship, they behave in a way that is similar to other adulterous lovers for whom there is no reference to Christian scruples. The Christian dimension does, nonetheless, reappear to a degree at the end of the lai, when the lovers are buried together in an abbey, thus, apparently with the blessing of the Church.

The inclusion of a religious dimension in this particular lai is not easily explicable. It cannot be said to be integral to the story, nor does it provide any really significant insight into the two main characters. This does seem, indeed, to be little more than the payment of lip service to the scruples of Christians, without there existing a literary convention in the lais that would make the payment of such lip service necessary. There certainly appears to be no strength of conviction behind this inclusion to make this attempted reconciliation between adulterous love and Christian morality convincing.

In Eliduc, by contrast, the introduction of a Christian dimension to the story plays a more essential role, appearing as integral to the narrative as a whole. For this reason it will be considered at greater length in subsequent chapters. Yet, even here, the inclusion of this religious dimension appears to some extent as merely a convenient device to enable the narrative to progress to a suitable conclusion. It is, indeed, uncertain just how acceptable the religious solution offered in the story would have been in the eyes of the contemporary Church. This was a period of much controversy over the question of divorce and the annulment of marriage. That a man's wife had retired to a convent was not



unanimously accepted as providing the man with the right to take a second wife<sup>18</sup>. Thus the religious answer proposed by Marie in Eliduc might arrange the situation between Eliduc, Guilliadun and Guildeluëc conveniently enough by the terms of the lai, but without being a truly acceptable Christian resolution.

It is evident from the references to the Church in these lais, as much as from the lack of such references in the other lais, that concerns about the Christian religion and man's relationship with God were not foremost in the minds of the authors in the composition of the lais. What preoccupied them was the individual in relationship with others - men and women - and it is for this reason that this study is limited to such social and personal relationships. Thus, as will be seen, the scope of interest encompassed by the lais corresponds closely to what is indicated in the character descriptions that appear in them. It is obvious that many of these descriptions are conventionalised, a reflection of the values upheld in contemporary society, and an idealisation of them<sup>19</sup>. There is, however, sufficient variation for this not to be exclusively the case<sup>20</sup>, enabling the reader to make certain assumptions as to the identity and merit of particular characters and as to whether their just destiny within the context of the lai will include personal and/or social fulfilment.

Chapter One: Footnotes

- 1 (p.17) Martine Thiry-Stassin and Madeleine Tyssens: Narcisse: conte ovidien français du XIIe siècle.

Thiry-Stassin and Tyssens point to the debt of the anonymous author of Narcissus to the Old French authors of the Roman de Thèbes and the Enéas for the spirit of this description of Narcissus (p.65). They note, however, his originality also: -

Son originalité se marque aussi dans la présentation de l'oeuvre d'art que constitue la physionomie du jeune homme. p.66

- 2 (p.21) Mortimer J. Donovan: The Breton Lay: A Guide to Varieties.

Whatever his source, he has removed its primitive quality and given it a thirteenth century chivalric meaning. p.86

- 3 (p.24) Glyn S. Burgess: Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire pré-courtois.  
see pp. 91-103,

C'est à travers la prouesse, la qualité militaire essentielle, que le héros courtois vise à la conquête du temps et de l'espace, conquête qui est réalisée au moyen de l'aventure et qui entraîne inévitablement la conquête d'un coeur féminin. p.103

- 4 (p.25) Jill M. Pepper: Courtly Conventions, 1150-1250, as shown in the Tristan Legends, in the Writings of Marie de France and in the Arthurian Legends.  
see pp. 230-32.

Despite the lofty ideals of chivalry and the refinements of courtoisie, the late twelfth century was an age of materialism and self-advancement. Consequently great importance was attached to generosity, whether it was manifested in the prizes of the tournament, in rewards for services, in costly presents or in lavish hospitality offered to all travellers. p.230.

- 5 (p.27) Joanne A. Rice: 'Conventional and Unconventional Character Description in the Lais of Marie de France'.  
Marie's use of certain words for the sake of rhyme p. 346.

Emil Schiøtt: L'Amour et les amoureux dans les Lais de Marie de France.  
see p.36

- 6 (p.27) Burgess: Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire pré-courtois.

La courtoisie ne semble pas se rattacher à une seule autre vertu, mais tend à résumer une série de gestes sociaux convenables à la nouvelle tonalité de la vie.  
La courtoisie implique le succès social, c'est-à-dire que l'homme courtois plaît à ses contemporains. p.31

- 7 (p.35) Herman Braet: Deux lais féeriques bretons: Graellent et Tyolet.

L'éducation incomplète de Tyolet correspond au milieu à la fois protecteur et sauvage où il a grandi: la forêt, lieu inculte et fermé sur lui-même, et qui accuse vivement pour le lecteur du moyen âge, l'absence et l'éloignement du monde de la cour et de la chevalerie. p.65

Mais soulignons d'autre part le rôle positif et important que joue la forêt dans la formation de l'adolescent. Celui-ci, s'il ignore le métier des armes, peut exercer à loisir ses talents de chasseur. L'auteur, à juste titre, insiste: Tyolet, en somme, se prépare à sa future, la quête du cerf au pied blanc. p.65

- 8 (p.37) Tony Hunt: 'The Emergence of the Knight in France and England 1000-1200'.

When the financial resources and executive power of a class are no longer sufficient to guarantee its exclusiveness, it resorts to criteria of taste, manners and moral superiority. p.100

- 9 (p.38) Burgess: Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire pré-courtois.  
see pp.37-43

Vilain est donc à l'origine, ainsi que corteis, un terme social. Le passage d'une acception sociale à l'acception morale s'explique cependant sans difficulté, tant il est facile de comprendre le mépris attaché très tôt au mot vilain par l'aristocratie des propriétaires fonciers. p.37

L'idéal de la société courtoise est la courtoisie. Toute action qui tend à porter atteinte à cet idéal est rigoureusement condamnée. Elle est vilaine. p.43

- 10 (p.40) Glyn S. Burgess: 'Chivalry and Prowess in the Lais of Marie de France'.

Marie's knights are brave and handsome young men, well equipped to be a success on the battlefield, in the banqueting hall and in the bed-chamber. In many cases their military qualities have to be taken on trust. p.137

This applies also to many of the heroes of the other lais.

- 11 (p.41) Ernest Hoepffner: 'Pour la chronologie des Lais de Marie de France'.  
see pp. 358-59.

Hoepffner points to the debt owed by Marie to the Romans d'Antiquité for her descriptions of female beauty, and also for other descriptions.

- 12 (p.42) Ernest Hoepffner: 'Marie de France et l'Eneas'.  
Hoepffner accepts the possibility that Marie was influenced in this description of the fairy's beautiful clothes and mount by descriptions in Enéas, but feels the source to be rather the Roman de Thèbes. pp.278-79.

Au moment où elle écrit Lanval, Marie ne connaît apparemment pas encore la tradition française de l'Enéide. p.279

Philippe Ménard: Les Lais de Marie de France.

Ménard disputes Hoepffner's claims as to Marie's debt to the Roman de Thèbes.

Toute ressemblance n'est pas un signe d'emprunt ou de plagiat. Il peut y avoir parfois des réminiscences involontaires, des vers qui chantent dans la mémoire. Souvent on a affaire à des rencontres fortuites. p.39

- 13 (p.44) Alice M. Colby: The Portrait in Twelfth-Century French Literature.

If too much emphasis is placed on the good looks of a young man he may seem effeminate to the listener. Possibly this is the reason why twelfth-century poets portrayed more beautiful women than handsome men; but, as we shall show presently, the preponderance of descriptions of feminine beauty in all probability results far more from the fact that the comeliness of a maiden was essential to the plot of the story more frequently than the handsomeness of a knight. p.92

- 14 (p.45) Colby: The Portrait in Twelfth-Century French Literature.  
see pp. 27-28.

It is interesting to see how many ways there are of saying 'in the world'. p.28

- 15 (p.48) Rice: 'Conventional and Unconventional Character Description of the Lais of Marie de France'.  
see p. 347.

Jeanne Wathelet-Willem is, however, justified in her criticism of Equitan himself in this lai. Marie provides a conventionally favourable description of him, which in no way corresponds with his character as it is revealed through the action. pp.332-33

- 16 (p.49) Burgess: Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire pré-courtois.

Les vertus féminines mises en valeur par Benoît de Sainte-Maure sont la sagesse, la franchise, la prouesse, la beauté et la largesse. p.32

- 17 (p.52) Georges Duby: Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth-Century France.  
see pp. 11-12. The impact of primogeniture on marriage for younger sons and heiresses.

- 18 (p.60) Ibid.
- 19 (p.60) Pepper: Courtly Conventions, 1150-1250 .  
see pp. 348-349.
- 20 (p.60) Schiött: L'Amour et les amoureux dans les Lais de Marie de France.  
Schiött's disregard for the character descriptions in Marie's Lais is a little extreme.

Si on trouve l'un d'entre eux qualifié d'une épithète qu'un autre n'a pas, il est probable que Marie ne s'est servie de cette expression que par hasard et qu'elle n'a voulu indiquer par là aucune différence essentielle. p. 35

## CHAPTER TWO: FORMS OF SOCIAL FULFILMENT

For an assessment of a character's social fulfilment there has to be a consideration both of that character's personal qualities and behaviour and of his environment. Certain basic conditions, affecting both the individual and his environment, can be pointed to as necessary for the achievement of social fulfilment and integration.

1. Considering first the individual, the most basic of these conditions is that he/she should have a human form, as opposed to a bestial appearance. In the majority of the lais, there is no direct reference to this, other than in the descriptions of the beauty of the character; as a point in itself it is too obvious to need mentioning. There are, however, a number of lais in which it does acquire a particular importance, as indicated in the previous chapter. It appears, then, as an essential feature of the identity of any individual.

2. In the lais there is another aspect considered fundamental to an individual's identity, and which can be referred to as his/her family identity. It is necessary for any character to have a social status that he/she should know of his parents' identity. In some of the lais there is also the necessity for a closeness - physical and/or affective - between the individual and his/her parents; in the main, however, the emphasis is simply on the individual's having knowledge of his/her own identity as defined by that of his/her parents.

These two aspects apply to both male and female characters.

3. There are, however, some aspects that apply more specifically to male characters than to female characters, the social role of men being more clearly defined. As the male characters focused upon the *lais* are all of the knightly class, it is necessary for them to be active knights, possessing the chivalric qualities and skills indicated in the previous chapter, and acting in accordance with them. This is their role within the equilibrium of the social hierarchy of the three orders, bellatores, laudatores, laboratores.

4. In many of the *lais* there is also emphasis on a character's involvement in particular types of social relationship. As a vassal, he will have to fulfil certain obligations to his overlord, who, in the *lais*, is often a king.

5. As an overlord, he will also have certain complementary obligations towards his own vassals. With the exception of those characters who are kings, the individual in the *lais* will appear both as a vassal and as an overlord.

6. Reciprocity is an essential factor in all social relationships. The fulfilment by an individual of his social obligations, as vassal and/or lord, is in itself only enough to ensure him of partial fulfilment in social terms. For a lord-vassal relationship to be considered wholly successful, reciprocity is necessary. Thus, it is necessary for the vassal to be well appreciated according to his worth by his lord, and equally for the lord to be served loyally by his vassals.

7. In the lais there is a particular emphasis also on marriage as a social institution as much as a personal relationship<sup>1</sup>. In social terms, it involves the individual in obligations not only to his/her spouse but of wider implications in other socially defined relationships.

8. Although aspects of Christian belief and practice are not much focused upon the lais, the relationship between monastic life and society is presented in two lais and referred to in another.

9. In three of the lais there are also references to hermits, who, although living somewhat aside from society, nonetheless interact with it.

A consideration of these different social roles focuses on the individual and the extent to which he has control over his relationship with society in relation to the extent which he fulfils the obligations implicit in these roles. The importance of reciprocity, as indicated in the case of lord-vassal relationships, applies in a wider sense. It is the lynch pin for any relationship between an individual and the rest of society. Thus for an individual to achieve full social integration, it is necessary not only for him/her to fulfil his/her obligations towards society, but also for that society to uphold and to function according to certain standards.

10. The most basic necessity is that the social environment be within the Real World. This can be assumed without comment for many of the lais, acquires a relevance in those lais in which there is some interaction with the Other World.



11. In some, but certainly not all, of the texts it appears as important that the individual be in his own native country.

12. To be found consistently in all of the *lais* is the notion of the individual existing and participating in a particular social milieu, corresponding to his/her social class. Thus the desirable social setting for the heroes and heroines of these stories appears as an aristocratic or royal one. It is in such an environment that he/she can achieve social fulfilment.

All of these factors can have a direct bearing on the nature of the relationship between the individual and society. The extent to which the different factors are featured in the various *lais*, and the way in which they are presented, varies from text to text. This will emerge from a more detailed study of these forms of social fulfilment.

#### 1. Human Form

The only two *lais* in which this most fundamental aspect of an individual's identity is of particular significance are Bisclavret and Melion. In these texts, the importance of this aspect as a basis for social fulfilment is made clear as it is only when the heroes of them are in human form that they can be fully active in an existence within society.

The transformation into a wolf by Bisclavret does not affect his human character, his appreciation of human society or his desire to participate in that society. This is evident from his relationship with the King during the period when he is a wolf. It is in the

form of a wolf that Bisclavret meets the King in the forest, but it is as a human that he responds. Instead of fleeing from the danger of being killed as a wild animal by the King and his companions from the court, he approaches them and appeals for mercy. He is evidently keen to rejoin human society, which is his natural environment, and seizes the first opportunity of doing so by following the King back to the court.

Li reis s'en est turnez a tant.  
Li bisclavret le vet siwant:  
Mut se tint pres, n'en vout partir,  
Il n'ad cure de lui guerpier.

Bisclavret 161-64.

This is, however, only partial integration, and as he retains still the form and limited capabilities of a wolf, he cannot participate actively in society. This only becomes possible once he is restored to human form and thereby to his true identity, which could not be known while he had the appearance of a wolf. It is only then that he can attempt to fulfil any of the other conditions for complete social fulfilment, as a knight and loyal vassal of the King.

Despite differences in the character and experiences of Melion we find the same emphasis in Melion as in Bisclavret on the importance of human appearance as a basis for social fulfilment. After a period of living in the wilds as a wolf, Melion is keen to be reintegrated in human society. Despite his desires in this direction only partial reintegration is possible for him living with King Arthur until he, like Bisclavret, is restored to human form.

The only other lai in which the human form acquires a particular significance is Yonec. Muldumarec metamorphoses from a hawk to a fine looking knight. This allows him to enjoy a relationship with a mortal woman, and through this to be involved in the Real World.

His involvement in the Real World is, however, limited to this particular relationship, which exists only in personal terms and aside from the rest of society. Thus, even with the appearance of a knight, Muldumarec cannot be said to be participating in society. A greater degree of integration in the society of the Real World would, in any case, be unnatural for Muldumarec, given that his true identity is not as a human but as a being from the Other World.

In the other *lais* the human appearance of the characters is self-evident from the references to their physical beauty, as indicated in the previous chapter.

## 2. Family Identity

The social identity of an individual can never be defined for an individual totally in isolation from his/her familial background. For a character in the *lais* to be socially fulfilled there must exist some bond, either direct and physical or based at least on knowledge, between him/her and this background which exists as a birthright. Social status and consequently the social roles of the individual are determined not only in relation to the individual's personal character and behaviour within society, but also in relation to parentage<sup>2</sup>. Because of the importance of this link between the individual and his/her family it is possible to talk of social pre-destination, the individual as inescapably an integral part and a continuation of a lineage. It is because of the real importance of such a notion that the status quo of society in terms of enclosed castes could be perpetuated, a status quo considered desirable by the nobility of the twelfth century fearful of the upsurge of parvenus. In such a society the fulfilment of a

social role that is defined by the social status of one's parents appears as an obligation as well as a privilege. The attitude of the contemporary nobility in this respect is reflected in the *lais*, as it is by the members of this class that the *lais* are predominantly peopled<sup>3</sup>. It is for this reason that there are such references as we have seen to the elevated birth of the protagonists of the *lais*.

Although in many of the *lais* the relationship between socially elevated birth and a socially elevated status can be assumed, there are some in which this relationship becomes of crucial importance. We have already seen how strongly Dané feels her own identity to be determined by that of her father, the King of Thebes (Narcisus). Her uncertainty as to how to behave is derived less from a fear that her behaviour might be intrinsically wrong than from the fear of bringing dishonour upon her family (Narcisus 269; 385; 474; 599-605).

In Tyolet also the awareness of parental identity is a determining factor affecting the young hero's perception of his rightful role in society. Tyolet is the son of a knight; it is, therefore natural and necessary for him also to be knight, and although brought up apart from chivalric society, it is only in this particular milieu that he can achieve the degree of social fulfilment that is his birthright. Thus it is that on becoming aware of his father's identity, Tyolet immediately decides to become a knight himself and to seek to be integrated into the knightly society of Arthur's court. The sense of his perpetuating his father's role in society is indicated by his being equipped with the arms that were his father's (Tyolet 261-66). The identity of the father determines not only the personal qualities that are inherited by the son, but also

the social role that is to be filled by him.

Similarly in Fresne, we see the necessity for a character to have knowledge of her parents' identity as a basis for achieving her own social fulfilment. Fresne is the daughter of a noble family. It is, then, natural for her to possess those qualities of character that can be designated as noble. These intrinsic qualities make her suited to an existence within courtly society, and as Gurun's mistress she behaves as graciously as any other young woman of noble birth who appears in the *lais*. It is, however, only when her true identity is formally established that she can be fully integrated into society. Given her noble birth and her personal qualities, it is clear that her rightful position is not on the fringes of society as Gurun's mistress, but as his wife. Once her mother acknowledges Fresne's identity as her daughter, Fresne is immediately able to marry Gurun and thereby to occupy her rightful position in aristocratic society.

The importance of Fresne's noble birth as an intrinsic part of her identity is made clear throughout the *lai*. Even when she is abandoned as a baby, Fresne is not completely severed from this aspect of her background. Although there is nothing to indicate the exact identity of her parents, the coverlet and the ring that are left with Fresne are evidence of her being noble. This is, indeed, their specific function within the story, as intended by her mother.

La u la meschine ert trovee,  
Bien sachent tuit vereielement  
Qu'ele est nee de bone gent.

Fresne 132-34.

Thus, even Fresne's mother, unnatural in her lack of maternal love, appreciates the importance for her daughter of retaining this at

least as a basic link with her true noble identity. It is this, indeed, that ensures that Fresne has some chance of participating in a social milieu that is suitable for her, even before her full identity is discovered. On seeing the ring and the coverlet, the porter, who first finds Fresne, realises that it would not be right for him and his daughter to bring up the child.

Bien surent cil a escient  
Qu'ele est nee de haute gent.

Fresne 209-10.

The evidence of her noble birth is appreciated by the abbess also, who provides Fresne with an education that is not unsuitable for a girl of noble parentage. It is specifically the coverlet that alerts Fresne's mother to the girl's identity. Thus throughout the lai Fresne retains a link with her noble birth which enables her ultimately to fulfil the role in society that is a part of her birthright. It is, nonetheless, crucial for her that the link with her family should be established specifically through the reunion with her mother, and not merely obliquely by means of the ring and the coverlet.

This need for a character to have some link with the identity of his parents as a means to fulfilling his rightful role in society is of fundamental importance in Haveloc. For Haveloc the link with his birth and his own identity as defined by the circumstances of that birth is far more obscured than for Fresne, and the route that he must travel before he can achieve fulfilment in this social role is far from being an easy one. Haveloc's father is the King of Denmark, Haveloc his rightful heir, and by the end of the lai Haveloc does, indeed, succeed in wearing his inherited crown. Socially displaced and in exile from his own country throughout his childhood, it is only as an adult that Haveloc discovers his royal

identity. This is the crucial key that enables him to claim his throne and to fulfil his natural role in society as his father's son. On being told by Kelloc that his father was King of Denmark, Haveloc immediately returns to Denmark (Haveloc 595-64), where it is specifically as his father's son that he is welcomed by his rightful subjects (Haveloc 812-975). In Haveloc, then, the relationship between father and son exists purely in social terms; Haveloc's father being dead, there is no chance of an affective bond being established between them.

Here, as in Fresne, this link between the individual and his/her family identity is central to the story as a whole. In other lais also the importance of this relationship is indicated specifically, albeit not always with such emphasis.

Thus, in Milun, Milun's son, who grows up apart from his father, feels the need to establish a bond with his father by proving himself a worthy son. It is Milun's reputation as a knight of excellence that spurs his son to emulate him by excelling also on the field of action. He says:-

'Mut se deit hum preisier petit,  
Quant il issi fu engendrez  
E sis pere est si alosez,  
S'il ne se met en greinur pris  
Fors de la tere e del pais.'

Milun 306-10.

Setting his father as a model, the young man proves himself to have inherited all of his father's skills as a knight, and it is by following in this way the example of his father that he is reunited with him, matched against him in a tournament<sup>4</sup>.

The actual recognition scene between father and son is made possible

by the ring worn by the son and which belonged to Milun. This ring, thus, plays the same role as a material symbol of the link between parent and child that has remained unbroken as the coverlet and the ring in Fresne. It is a link that transcends physical separation. In every case that has been considered here it has been necessary for there to be some such link to enable the child to achieve rightful social fulfilment: here, the ring; in Fresne, the coverlet; in Tyolet, Tyolet's own mother; in Haveloc, Kelloc. In each case these are the means by which the child's identity is revealed to him/her as well as to the rest of society, and, thereby, the means to the child's fulfilling his/her rightful destiny within society.

Milun's reunion with his father leads him directly to being reunited also with his mother, and thence to their marriage,

Lur fiz amdeus les assembla,  
La mere a sun pere dona.

Milun 527-28.

This is a legitimization and an integration of both his parents' relationship together and of the young man's own position as their son.

Doon contains obvious echoes of Milun in its emphasis on the relationship between a father and a son. Whereas in Milun it is the son who takes the initiative towards the reunion with his father by emulating his chivalric exploits, in Doon it is the father who specifically determines how such a reunion will be possible when his son is grown up. Even before the boy is born, Doon tells his wife how he should be brought up in order that he will be worthy of him and assured of his rightful place in society as the son of a knight. He says: -

'Vos estes ençainte de moi,



.I. filz avrez, si con je croi,  
mon anel d'or le garderai;  
qant il ert granz, si li donroiz,  
bien li commandez a garder:  
par l'anel me porra trover.  
Au roi de France l'envoiez,  
la soit norriz e enseingniez'

Doon 177-84.

Thus, even though brought up apart from his father, Doon's son is educated in a way that is suitable; Doon has certainly not abdicated his responsibilities towards his son - a very different parent from Fresne's mother.

The reunion scene between father and son in Doon is very similar to that in Milun; here too they are matched together in a tournament, here too the father's ring worn by the son serves as the point of recognition, the ring specifically intended by the father to serve this purpose. It is, however, not only the ring that allows Doon to identify his son: in his skills as a knight the young man proves himself a worthy son, a worthy member of Doon's lineage. Doon says to his son after the combat: -

'Vallet, fet il, bien m'aparçui  
qant tu jostas a moi jehui,  
que tu eres de mon ~~lingage~~<sup>lineage</sup>;  
molt a en toi grant vasselage.'

Doon 255-58.

The young man has inherited not only his father's ring, but also his prowess as a knight, he has proved himself to have grown into the man his father intended him to be.

In Desiré it is the mother, Desiré's mistress who assumes the responsibility for the upbringing of their children and for ensuring that they will achieve the degree of fulfilment in the society of the Real World that is their due as Desiré's children. It is for this reason that she sends their son to meet his father, as is made

clear by the son himself, who says to Desiré: -

'Sire, fet il, tu ies mes pere,  
ici m'a enveié ma mere;  
ensemble od vus volt ke jo seie,  
Ke mes parenz conuise e veie.'

Desiré 455-58.

Desiré's mistress appears as the author's mouthpiece, representing in her behaviour and in her opinions the standards that the author seeks to uphold through the lai as a whole. Thus the reader must admire her for her concern that her children be integrated into courtly society in a way that is fitting. At the end of the lai she brings both her son and her daughter to the court specifically for this purpose, justifying her requests for them on the grounds of the identity of their parents. She says to the King: -

'Volunterz devez conseiller  
enfanz a si bon chevalier  
e a tel dame cum jo sui.'

Desiré 705-07.

This is at the time when she has also come to take Desiré away with her to the Other World; the children left behind in the royal court appear in such circumstances as the replacement for their father, ensuring that his lineage will be perpetuated.

The relationship between father and son in the Lai d'Espine is undoubtedly more conventional than any of these so far considered in the other lais, and possibly more of a model as to how such relationships should exist. Unlike the relationships portrayed in those other lais, it plays no direct role in the development of the narrative. Its essential purpose is in allowing the young hero of the lai to develop his skills as a knight. The father appears as upholding the positive values of society and of chivalry, and it is on a basis of such values that his relationship with his son develops. The son turns to him when first deciding to establish a

reputation as a knight (Espine 142-54), and again when wanting to undertake the adventure of the 'Gué de l'Espine' (Espine 209-15). A caring father, he does not want his son to undertake unnecessary risks, he does not, however, wish to stand in the way of his son's attempts to prove his worth as a knight and thereby to earn his place in society. It is with appreciation of his son by such terms, that he welcomes his son's return to the court at the end of the lai. Their relationship is based on mutual respect, which is essential for the son to develop as a man with an awareness of his role in society.

In Guigemar also there is particular emphasis on the closeness of the relationship between the young hero and his family, this at the beginning of the lai where he is primarily portrayed in terms of his successes as an active knight.

En la flur de sun meillur pris  
S'en vait li ber en sun païs  
Veeir sun pere e sun seignur,  
Sa bone mere e sa sorur,  
Ki mult l'aveient desiré.  
Ensemble od eus ad sujurné,  
Ceo m'est avis, un meis entier.

Guigemar 69-75.

Guigemar's family appears, thus, as representing part of a basis of social stability for Guigemar, at least initially. There might, however, be something excessive in this relationship, preventing Guigemar from developing to maturity as an individual independent of them. This aspect of the relationship will be considered subsequently.

In Deus Amanz, there can certainly be no doubt that the closeness of the parent-child relationship is indeed excessive, with serious social and well as personal repercussions for the daughter who is

too much loved by the father. It is because of this love that the father is unwilling to allow the girl to marry.

Forment l'amot e chierisseit.  
De riches hommes fu requisite,  
Ki volentiers l'eüssent prise;  
Mes li reis ne la volt doner,  
Karne s'en poeit consirrer.

Deus Amanz 24-28.

This lai does not stand in contrast to the others; it should not be read as denying the importance of the importance in social terms of the parent-child relationship as such. The King's unwillingness to allow his daughter to fulfil her rightful role in society through marriage is due to his regarding her less as a daughter than as a substitute for his dead wife, with the hint perhaps of incest.

Cunfortez fu par la meschine,  
Puis que perdueot la reine.

Deus Amanz 31-32.

The behaviour of this father contributes to our appreciation of how a father should behave towards his child. What is essential for the child-parent relationship to be successful in social terms is that there should be a balance. It is this relationship that defines ~~basic~~ social identity, that should provide the child with a foundation of social stability, and above all should enable the child to achieve fulfilment in other relationships in society.

### 3. Fulfilment of the Knightly Role

From the range of attributes applied to the male characters in the lais it is obvious that the ability to fulfil successfully their role of active knight is of particular importance in these texts. In many of the lais, the only evidence of such ability is, nonetheless, only in the descriptions themselves, providing a basic criterion by which the characters can be judged. In other lais,

however, we find these qualities and skills of knighthood put into action, with the hero excelling on the battlefield, in tournaments, in single combat. These are the activities that prove their worth as knights and by which they can assert their rights to recognition by society<sup>5</sup>.

The preliminary step towards such social fulfilment is in the acquiring of skills of chivalry. For this the young man is often sent away to the court of a king who then knights him. The knighting by such an elevated personage serves as an indication of the young man's worth<sup>6</sup>, a launching of him on his active career in which he has to fulfil the potential that has been recognised in him.

This is the case for Guigemar: -

Quant fu venu termes e tens  
Ke il aveit eage e sens,  
Li reis l'adube richement,  
Armes li dune a sun talent,

Guigemar 45-48.

It is also the case for Doon's son, who is trained at the court of the King of France in accordance with his father's wishes: -

En France fu si longuement  
que li rois en fist chevalier

Doon 204-05.

Similarly, when Desiré's mistress brings their son to the court it is for him to be advised and knighted by the King: -

Li rei fet armes apoter,  
li damaisel volt aduber.  
Il meismes li saint l'espee  
e si li dona l'acolee.  
De Moreis e de Leoneis  
aveit a la feste dous reis;  
Cil li chaugat les esperuns  
par grant honur a genuluns.

Desiré 725-32.

It is in Tyolet that there is the greatest emphasis on the need for a well born young man to appreciate the qualities of chivalry and to

be knighted. The stag knight first indicates to Tyolet how a knight should be (Tyolet 221), and Tyolet's mother urges her son to go to Arthur's Court in order to be a fine knight (Tyolet 269-74). Thus by the time that Tyolet arrives at the court he is fully aware of what qualities and skills he must possess to become a knight. He says to Arthur: -

'Filz sui, biau sire, s'il vos plest,  
a la veve de la forest;  
a vos m'envoie certainement  
tot por aprendre afetement.  
Sens voil aprendre e cortoisie,  
savoir voil de chevalerie,  
a tornoier e a joster,  
a despendre, e a donner.  
Car ainz ne fu ja cort de roi,  
ne jamés n'iert si con je croi,  
ou tant ait bien n'afetement,  
courtoisie, n'ensaingnement.'

Tyolet 299-310.

This is Tyolet's first decisive step towards social fulfilment, the result of his awareness that it is his right and his duty to become a knight.

In Haveloc also the knighting of the hero comes about as the result of his becoming aware that it is necessary if he is to fulfil the role in society that is his birthright. The circumstances of this knighting are unusual; it is when Haveloc returns to Denmark to claim his throne that he is knighted by his own subjects. The ceremony therefore acquires a particular significance and a pledging by them of loyalty to him as king.

De totes parz i acoreient  
E riche e povre, ki l'oeient,  
De lui firent lur avoë,  
A chevaler l'unt adobé.

Haveloc 925-28.

It is once he has been knighted that he can assert his rights to his throne in combat against Odulf.

There are very few of the male protagonists in the lais who have not been knighted. There is the young man in Deus Amanz; this it can be assumed, is because he is too young for his potential to have been fully developed in this way. There are also the protagonists of the lais d'antiquité, Narcisus and Pirus, this is clearly because of the Ovidian origins of the stories as well as the youth of their heroes.

Many of the other heroes of the lais, particularly those who remain unnamed, are referred to as 'le chevalier'. It can be assumed that they have received a training and a knighting in similar circumstances to Guigemar and to Doon's son. Such training and ceremonial provides, however, only the basis for the career of a knight: he has then to prove his worth, establish his reputation in society through chivalric exploits.

Thus it is that Guigemar leaves the court to travel around fighting in numerous wars: -

En Flaundres vait pur sun pris quere:  
La out tuz jurz estrif e guerre.  
En Lorreine ne en Burguine,  
Ne en Angou ne en Gasquine,  
A cel tens ne pout hom truver  
Si bon chevalier ne sun per.

Guigemar 51-56.

Guigemar also demonstrates his skills as a soldier in his successful siege against Meriaduc's castle (Guigemar 836-80).

Haveloc too is shown active on the battlefield, defeating first Odulf to claim his own throne then Edelsi to claim that of Argentille. Haveloc's success as a warrior is an integral part of the story as a whole, in such a way as to relate him more to the

heroes of the chansons de geste perhaps than to the heroes of the other lais. Indeed, the general tone of Haveloc seems to indicate this, with surely some relationship between Haveloc, working as the scullion Cuaran in Edelsi's court, and the figure of Rainouart who appears in both the Aliscans and the Chanson de Guillaume<sup>7</sup>.

The only other lai in which the hero's skills as a knight are specifically demonstrated on the battlefield is Eliduc. Eliduc's exploits in fighting on behalf of the King of Exeter lead directly to his being welcomed into the King's court, and to his being rewarded with a position in the King's service.

Possibly in response to the actuality as well as the tastes of a more peaceful contemporary society, wars do not feature much in the lais, and prowess on the battlefield is not the only way by which the heroes of these stories are able to prove their worth as knights. In times of peace the alternative arena was the tournament which demanded many of the same skills as were required in battles and could be relied upon to provide the same rewards, a reputation, the possibility of service for some powerful lord, horses captured from defeated opponents and other such prizes, all of which were desirable for younger sons without an inheritance to support the expensive lifestyle of a knight<sup>8</sup>. Thus it is that, in reflection of social reality, a number of the male protagonists of the lais are shown to be excellent knights through their exploits in tournaments.

This is the case in Doon. Having been knighted, Doon's son begins his travels to establish his reputation in the same way that Guigemar does; but whereas Guigemar does so by fighting in wars, Doon's son goes to tournaments.



e il erra por tornoier,  
querant son pris e pres e loing.  
N'oï parler de nul besoing  
Ne vosist estre li premiers,  
molt fu amez de chevaliers;  
a merveille fu de grant pris,  
n'ot si vaillant homme el païs,  
de chevaliers ot grant compaignie.

Doon 206-13.

It is by going to tournaments also that Milun's son proves his worth as an active knight (Milun 317-40).

Dreit en Brutaine en est alez.  
La despendi e turneia,

Milun 320-21.

The description of his exploits can be compared with the description of his father at the beginning of his career as a knight, but whereas it is specifically in tournaments that the son makes his name it is less clear in the case of Milun.

Puis le jur k'il fu adubez  
Ne trova un sul chevalier  
Ki l'abatist de sun destrier.  
Mut par esteit bons chevaliers,  
Francs e hardiz, curteis e fiers.  
Mut fu coneüz en Irlande,  
En Norwejë e en Guhtlande;  
En Logrë e en Albanie

Milun 10-17.

This description of his activities could apply equally to his fighting in wars as to in tournaments. That there can be such uncertainty is clear evidence of how similar a role both types of fighting play in allowing a young man to develop his reputation as a knight.

The importance of the tournament as a testing ground for a knight's prowess and skill is unambiguously indicated in Chaitivel, in which much of the focus is directed at one particular tournament which is intended to prove which of the lady's four suitors is the best knight.

In Espine too the young hero has a chance in the course of the story to demonstrate his excellence as a knight. This is in single combat against the knights from the Other World at the 'Gué de l'Espine' (Espine 307-462). The motif of the chivalric adventure as a means for the hero to reveal his prowess and to establish his reputation in the eyes of his society is common in the romances, but this is the only such example in the *lais*. It is as a result of this adventure that the young man in Espine asserts his rightful place in the society of the royal court, where his return after the combat is welcomed.

In Tyolet the adventure takes the form of the hunt for the white hoof of the stag. It is by his success in this that Tyolet is able to earn his glory at the court of King Arthur, which is presented in the text of this *lai* as the centre of highest chivalric excellence.

The hunt of the white boar in Guingamor is presented in a similar light, as a means for a knight to establish his reputation in society beyond doubt. This is certainly how Guingamor perceives it, success in this hunt appears to him almost as a duty to society and as a means for him to prove his worthiness to be a member of it.

In the other *lais*, the motif of the hunt is not endowed with such significance as a specific means to achieving social success. It appears above all in these as a suitable leisure activity for the knightly class, a reflection of social reality<sup>9</sup>. It is in such a way that Guigemar goes hunting accompanied by a number of companions, thereby showing himself to be a socially well integrated young man. The importance of this particular hunt episode lies, however, in its

advancing the narrative by forcing Guigemar into an awareness of the importance of love.

Thus, in the *lais* we are shown a number of different ways in which the knight can develop his chivalric skills and thereby establish his reputation in society.

#### 4. The Good Vassal

The role of knight is, for the heroes of the *lais*, their social role in most general terms. It is in developing, perfecting and exercising the skills of knighthood that the hero fulfils his socially determined function and justifies his position in society as a whole. By the terms of the feudal system, he has also to fulfil obligations in particular relationships within that society.

In Equitan we are given the portrait of the good vassal par excellence, active in the service of his lord. This is the portrait of the seneschal who serves King Equitan: -

Equitan ot un seneschal,  
Bon chevalier, pruz e leal;  
Tute sa tere li gardout  
E meinteneit e justisout.

Equitan 21-24.

His function is to administer the King's domain, to keep the peace in it. So well does the seneschal fulfil this role, that Equitan is little concerned with matters of government and is able to spend his own time in leisure pursuits of hunting and fishing (Equitan 25-28). We note the reference to the seneschal's loyalty which is an essential feature for all vassals in their service of an overlord.

In Eliduc, Eliduc is portrayed in a similar way in his vassalic relationships with both the King of Brittany and the King of Exeter. It is as a good vassal of the King of Brittany that Eliduc

is first introduced to the reader: -

Elidus avait un seignur,  
Rei de Brutaine la Meinur,  
Ki mut l'amot e cherisseit,  
E il l'eaument le serveit.  
U que li reis deüst errer,  
Il avait la tere a garder.  
Pur sa pruesce le retint

Eliduc 29-35.

Mut li servi a sun poeir,  
Ja ne deüst maugré avoir.

Eliduc 59-60.

Eliduc, like the seneschal in Equitan, is an exemplary vassal, entrusted with much responsibility in the service of his lord. His worthiness in such terms emerges also from his relationship with the King of Exeter. Eliduc first impresses the King of Exeter by his exploits on the battlefield. It is in reward for such voluntary aid that the King grants Eliduc a position of considerable importance in his service. This position involves Eliduc in much the same duties as he performed for the King of Brittany: -

Mut l'amat li reis e cheri.  
Un an entier l'ad retenu  
E ceus ki sunt od lui venu.  
La fiance delui en prist,  
De sa tere gardein en fist.

Eliduc 266-70.

Tant s'est de la guere entremis  
Qu'il avait retenu e pris  
Celui ki le rei guerreia,  
E tute la tere aquita.

Eliduc 543-46.

As well as indicating the nature of the duties that a vassal may have to fulfil in the service of his king, Eliduc provides particular insight into the importance that the formal pledge of loyalty has in this relationship between vassal and lord. Eliduc's initial fighting on behalf of the King of Exeter might have been voluntary, but subsequently he is legally bound in his service. Repeatedly there are references to this legal bond, stressing its importance. Thus the chamberlain says of Eliduc: -

'Dame, li reis l'ad retenu

Desqu'a un an par serement  
Qu'il li servirat lëaument.'

Eliduc 450-52.

Eliduc is, himself, particularly aware of the significance of this pledge and of the commitment that it demands of him in his relationship with the King of Exeter. He affirms to Guilliadun: -

'Un an sui remés od le rei,  
La fiancë ad de mei prise.  
N'en partirai en nule guise  
De si que sa guere ait finee,'

Eliduc 524-27.

Eliduc is, thus, presented as an exemplary vassal, unwavering in his loyalty. The extent of this loyalty emerges in particular through the unusual circumstances whereby he is shown in the service of two lords<sup>10</sup>. This situation, although unique in the *lais*, was less rare in reality. It was, at this period, increasingly common for a man to hold fiefs from more than one lord, and, therefore, to owe service and loyalty to more than one lord. There were occasions when this could result in a conflict of loyalties for the vassal. Although not always the case, it was, however, generally accepted by the law that the vassal primarily owed his loyalty to the lord to whom he had first pledged his fealty. This is precisely what Eliduc does here. He never abdicates his obligation of loyalty to the King of Brittany, even when in the service of the King of Exeter, and does not hesitate to respond to the appeal for his return made by the King of Brittany. In the wording of this appeal we find further emphasis still on the binding nature of the pledge of allegiance made by the vassal to his lord: -

Pur sun grant busuin le mandot  
E s'umuneit e conjurot,  
Par l'alliance qu'il li fist  
Quant il l'umage de lui prist,

Eliduc 565-68.

Eliduc is fully aware that his duty as a vassal must in such circumstances transcend all personal considerations, and he does not flinch from returning to serve the King of Brittany, even though it

will cause him to be separated from the woman he loves<sup>11</sup>. Eliduc says to Guilliadun before leaving her: -

'Dame, fet il, pas ne vus ret  
De mesprisum ne de mesfet,  
Mes el país u j'ai esté  
Ai al rei plevi e juré  
Que jeo dei a lui repeirier,  
Kar de mei ad il grant mestier.'

Eliduc 727-32.

And the deep unhappiness that he suffers as a result of this separation does not interfere with his fulfilling his obligations to the King of Brittany once he has returned there: -

Eliduc od son seigneur fu,  
Mut li ad aidié e valu;  
Par le conseil de li errot  
E tute la tere gardot.

Eliduc 741-44.

Thus, there is, throughout the lai, much emphasis on the obligation of loyalty that a vassal owes to his lord, as well as an indication of the nature of the functions that he fulfils as a part of his service. Loyalty in both social and personal relationships is a central theme in Eliduc, and this focus on Eliduc's fulfilment of his vassalic obligations reinforces the impression of Eliduc as a hero worthy of the reader's sympathy, an aspect in the portrayal of him that is, as we have seen, very important. This image of the ideal vassal as presented through the character of Eliduc is not, however, exclusively relevant in this particular lai.

Guingamor also has a strong sense of loyalty towards his lord, who is also the King of Brittany. It is because of his obligation towards the King that Guingamor has a sense of obligation towards the Queen, to whom he says: -

'Bien sai, dame, q'amer vos doi,  
fame estes mon seignor le roi,  
et si vos doi porter honnor  
conne a la fame mon seignor.'

Guingamor 95-98.

Such honourable and respectful love he knows to be socially desirable; the adulterous love that the Queen is in fact proposing he knows, by contrast, to be quite unacceptable, and it is with the righteous indignation of the loyal vassal that he responds to her propositions<sup>12</sup>: -

grant honte en a, tout en rogi.  
Par mautalent se departi,

Guingamor 109-10.

Graelent asserts with even greater emphasis his allegiance to his king and his refusal to dishonour him in any way, when he in similar circumstances also rejects the amorous proposals of the Queen. He says: -

'Mais il ne peut pas estre ensi,  
car je sui saudoiers le roi;  
loiauté li promis e foi,  
e de sa vie e de s'anor,  
quant a lui remes l'autre jor;  
ja par moi honte n'i ara.'

Graelent 122-27.

Lanval asserts his loyalty to King Arthur in similar terms, when rejecting the Queen's advances: -

'Jeo n'ai cure de vus amer.  
Lungement ai servi le rei;  
Ne li ~~voil~~ pas mentir ma fei.  
Ja ~~pur~~ vus ne ~~pur~~ vostre amur  
Ne mesferai a mun seignur.'

Lanval 270-74.

We see, then, how fully conscious Guingamor, Graelent and Lanval are of the implications of the pledge of loyalty that they have made to their lords.

In Graelent, there are other indications as to how Graelent actively fulfils his role as a vassal: -

a Graelens molt se pena  
de tornoier e de joster  
e de ses anemis grever.

Graelent 16-18.

The importance that the role of the vassal has for Lanval is clearly indicated in the first reference there is to him: -

un mut gentil vassal:

Lanval 3.

It appears then as a fundamental part of his social identity. The extent to which he loyally fulfils this role is further stressed: -

Li chevaliers dunt jeo vus di,  
Ki tant aveit le rei servi,

Lanval 39-40.

Of all the characters in the lais it is Grim in Haveloc who proves himself to be most selfless of all in his vassalic loyalty. His behaviour throughout the lai is defined by this role, and it is in terms of his relationship with King Gunter that he is first presented: -

Grim ot [a] nun, mult le creï,  
Lealment l'ot tut dis servi.

Haveloc 59-60.

The demands that Gunter makes of Grim are more far reaching than those made of any other vassal in the lais: he is entrusted with the responsibility for the safety of Gunter's wife and son after Gunter's death (Haveloc 57-58). This is a burden of responsibility that he carries through the rest of his life. It is he who takes the initiative in taking Haveloc, Gunter's son, and his mother into exile in order to save their lives,

Grim fet sa nef apareiller  
E de viande ben charger;  
Fors del païs s'en volt fuïr  
Par le dreit eir de mort garir.

Haveloc 89-92.

It is he who continues to care for Haveloc after the death of the boy's mother, always conscious of his pledge to his lord, Gunter. It is to protect Haveloc from danger that he conceals Haveloc's identity by changing his name to Cuaran, and it is to provide Haveloc with every chance of reclaiming his natural royal status that Grim sends him to Edelsi's court (Haveloc 161-86). In his devotion to Haveloc and through his pledge to Gunter, Grim fulfils his vassalic obligations far beyond the normal call of duty.



Sigar Estal is another character in Haveloc who is willing to demonstrate his loyalty as a vassal even in the face of danger. As with Grim, his loyalty to Gunter, who was his lord, continues after the King's death, with his refusal to acknowledge the kingship of the usurper Odulf (Haveloc 625-27). He has never forgotten Gunter, and welcomes Haveloc, who resembles him physically: -

De sun seignur li remembra,  
Del rei Gunter k'il tant ama.

Haveloc 742-43.

It is because Haveloc is Gunter's son and, therefore, the rightful heir to Gunter's throne, that Sigar Estal pledges himself to Haveloc's service, he says: -

'Ma lealté vus en afi'

Haveloc 874.

And he immediately proves his loyalty by assembling a huge army to help Haveloc reclaim his throne.

Tant li aida li seneschals,  
Ki prodom fu e bons vassals,  
Ke merveillus ost asembla.

Haveloc 929-31.

The men who respond to Sigar Estal's summons also pledge themselves formally to Haveloc's service, eager to fight against King Odulf on his behalf (Haveloc 925-27). It would be necessary for such a pledge to be made before Haveloc could assume any rights of leadership over the men fighting for him. This for many men of this period would have been the reality of their service as vassals, to defend the rights of their lord on the battlefield, a collective service of vassalry more than an individualised one. Accordingly, the men who pledge themselves here in Haveloc are presented not as individuals, but exclusively in terms of their role as loyal vassals. The presentation of such vassals is very different from the Sigar Estal or of Grim, and the nature of their vassalic role is clearly also very different. Grim is a man of elevated social status, who, like Eliduc in his relationships with the King of

Brittany and the King of Exeter, has enjoyed a close personal relationship with his king, and has been entrusted with very particular responsibilities. The function that these other men have to fulfil is less particularised, but their collective loyalty towards Haveloc as their lord is nonetheless important in enabling him to reclaim his crown.

Another group of vassals to assert their loyalty in this same lai are those who have served Argentille's father Achebrit. As with Gunter's men, their loyalty is tested after the death of their lord, when they seek to defend Argentille's rights to her crown against the usurpatory ambitions of Edelsi. This they do by forcing him to choose a husband for her (Haveloc 284-96).

Another example of such collective vassalic loyalty is to be found in Eliduc, in which Eliduc's men are asked to defend his rights and to look after his wife during his period of exile from his lands in Brittany (Eliduc 71-74).

In Yonec the love and loyalty of Muldumarec's people survives unabated for twenty or so years after his death, as evidenced by their tears when talking about him at the time when his mistress and his son come to the abbey (Yonec 513-20). It is this loyalty that has prevented them from pledging allegiance to any other lord, as he told them to wait for his son to come (Yonec 523-26), and accordingly, they welcome Yonec as Muldumarec's rightful heir, and their new lord.

In Fresne, Gurun's men confront their vassalic responsibilities in a somewhat different way, they remind Gurun of his duty to marry, and offer their ultimatum: -

Jamés pur seinur nel tendrunt  
Ne volentiers nel servirunt,  
Si il ne fait lur volenté.

Fresne 325-27.

Such threats of withdrawal of their service may seem extreme, and it is a threat never fulfilled. It is nonetheless, within their rights as vassals, as Gurun recognises, for reasons that will be considered in the section in this chapter on marriage as a social institution.

From this example of justified vassalic behaviour, we see that the vassal's role in society involves not only obligations of service, but other responsibilities and rights also. These rights are, as we shall see, to be upheld by the lord/king to whom they have pledged their vassalic service.

##### 5. The Good Lord/King

The satisfactory fulfilment of an individual of his seigniorial role is defined by his attitude and behaviour towards his men. A good lord can be expected to possess the qualities of an active knight; these are essential for him to be able to assert his authority. Unless he is a king, it is likely he will appear also in terms of his role as a vassal. If the crucial aspect of the fulfilment of the role of vassal is loyalty to one's lord, for the fulfilment of the role of overlord the crucial aspect is in the appreciation and recompense of one's vassals. The duties of a king are to a large extent the same as those of any feudal lord, although in some cases there is greater emphasis on his role as justiciary<sup>13</sup>.

An example of a good king is to be found in Arthur as he appears in the Lai du Trot: -

le roi Artu que bien savoit

.I. bon chevalier honorer  
e riches dons sovent doner.

Trot 10-12.

In the Lai du Mantel, Arthur is similarly portrayed as a monarch of boundless generosity (Mantel 48-63), and is referred to as: -

bon roi Artu

Mantel 49.

In Cor also he is called: -

Li [bons] reis Arzurs

Cor 5.

This despite the fact that in both lais, Arthur is subsequently revealed not to be without blemishes.

In Tyolet, on the other hand, Arthur is presented unequivocally as a good king: -

li rois qui tant sages fu,

Tyolet 527.

In this lai that is in many ways to be compared with the Conte du Graal, Arthur appears in a very different light from the sombre and taciturn king of Chrétien's romance (Conte du Graal 907-08). In the lai Arthur is immediately welcoming towards the young man who arrives at his court from the forest, accepting him into his service and inviting him to join the feasting (Tyolet 313-14). He appears as a lord who is loving and caring towards his men, and this consistently through the lai. Concerned about Tyolet's welfare, he is overjoyed when Tyolet returns safely from his adventure.

Li rois contre lui s'est levez,  
ses braz li a au col getez,  
puis le baise par grant amor.

Tyolet 625-27.

This show of love by the King is an indication of his appreciation of Tyolet's worth. He is also specifically shown to be a just king, in that he is determined to give Tyolet a fair chance to prove himself, even after the wicked knight has come to court with the

stag's white hoof and a claim to the princess's hand (Tyolet 527-30).

In Melion also, Arthur is presented unequivocally as a good king, appreciative of his men. At the beginning of the lai, he is shown fulfilling his role as king in general terms: -

cil ki les terres conqueroit,  
e qui dona les riches dons  
as chevaliers e as barons,

Melion 2-4.

It is, however, in his relationship with Melion that the King's qualities more fully emerge. When Melion sinks into listless depression over his lack of fulfilment, Arthur is concerned for him, the concern of a lord for a vassal (Melion 43), and he assumes responsibility for trying to rouse Melion from this unhappiness, by the means that he has as a king. He says to Melion: -

'Se tu veus terre ne manoir,  
n'autre cose que puisse avoir,  
se il est en ma roiauté,  
tu l'avras a ta volenté.'

Melion 49-52

and he gives Melion a fine castle as a fief.

This generosity displayed by Arthur at the beginning of the lai is more than matched by his treatment of Melion during and after his period as a werewolf. Despite the ferocious appearance of the beast, Arthur feeds him and takes care of him (Melion 421-50). Here also, Arthur is shown to be concerned with ensuring that justice is done. When Melion attacks the daughter of the King of Ireland, Arthur intervenes to prevent Melion from being put to death, insisting that there must be a reason for this attack and demanding to know what it is (Melion 491-510). When the truth has been revealed and Melion restored to human form, Melion requests that his wife be killed. Again Arthur intervenes with the voice of justice

and mercy, asking that her life be spared for the sake of their children (Melion 565-72).

The portrayal of Arthur in Melion can be related to that of the King in Bisclavret.

li reis,  
Ki tant fu sages e curteis,  
Bisclavret 221-22.

The focus on the King is in his relationship with Bisclavret, to whom he shows both mercy and generosity, in not killing him when Bisclavret first appears to him as a wolf and in taking care of Bisclavret while still in this bestial state.

E mut le tient a grant chierté.  
Bisclavret 169.

The King also proves himself to be an upholder of justice in much the same way that Arthur does in Melion. When Bisclavret has attacked his wife, the King refuses to condemn until he knows the truth about the situation. He has insight enough into Bisclavret's character not simply to base his judgement on appearances. It is his intervention here that forces the wife to reveal her crime against Bisclavret, a crime which he punishes by the terms of an eye for an eye justice in casting her into exile.

Once Bisclavret is returned to human form, the relationship between him and King is restored to a more conventional nature, though nonetheless exemplary in its closeness, the King's feelings for Bisclavret being based as much on love as seigniorial obligation.

Si tost cum il pot aveir aise,  
Tute sa tere li rendi;  
Plus li duna ke jeo ne di.  
Bisclavret 302-06.

The particular circumstances of both Melion and Bisclavret impose exceptional demands upon the two kings. No other lord in the lais

has to such an extent to demonstrate his capacity for insight, mercy and generosity. In terms of more conventional duties, as distributors of gifts and as justiciaries, their behaviour can be said to be typically that of a good monarch and overlord.

Arthur, as he appears in Lanval, is not so totally successful in the fulfilment of his seigniorial role. Yet, despite his failures as a lord, particularly in his relationship with Lanval, Arthur does have some sense of how he should behave as a king, and does distribute largesse to reward his men for their services.

Asez i duna riches duns  
E as cuntes e as baruns.

Lanval 13-14.

Femmes e teres departi,

Lanval 17.

In so doing he is, to an extent, fulfilling his function as king. It is, however, as a justiciary that Arthur appears most favourably in this lai. The crime of which Lanval is accused affects Arthur on both a social level, as disrespect against a royal personage and a personal level as that royal personage is his wife. Arthur clearly feels this very deeply, and his initial reaction is of great fury. Yet, even at this stage, he makes no attempt to overstep his authority as a king. His anger as a man dishonoured is such that he wants to see Lanval put to death, but, even without prompting, he knows that Lanval must have the right to defend himself.

Li reis s'en curuqat forment;  
Juré en ad sun serement,  
S'il ne s'en peot en curt defendre,  
Il le ferat ardeir u pendre.

Lanval 325-28.

Arthur knows that Lanval must be legally tried, and that, despite his position as king, he has no right to act without the advice of his counsellors<sup>14</sup>.

Li reis fu mut vers lui iriez:  
Tuz ses hummes ad enveiez  
Pur dire dreit qu'il en deit faire,  
C'um ne li puisse a mal retraire.

Lanval 381-84.

Arthur is all the time conscious that he must act justly and his fury never blinds him to his duties as a king and justiciary. It is the repeated references to his anger, emphasising the extent of that anger, that indicate how well he fulfils his seigniorial role in this context.

E. A. Francis in her article 'The Trial in Lanval'<sup>15</sup> has shown how closely this trial adheres to the correct legal procedures of the time. Edgard Sienaert<sup>16</sup> has criticised the proceedings for their slowness, claiming that Marie presents them in this way in order to show them as unsatisfactory. But surely this emphasis on detail demonstrates how conscientious those involved in the trial are, taking great care not to rush into any arbitrary decision against Lanval. And ultimately, the trial, presided over by the King, is proven to be just: as soon as Lanval's mistress appears at the court as evidence of Lanval's innocence he is acquitted. No decision, for or against Lanval, could with justice have been reached prior to this time, as only this evidence could disprove the Queen's case against Lanval, a case based entirely on his word against hers.

Thus, whatever other failings Arthur might possess and which are certainly in evidence at the beginning of the lai, by the end of it he proves himself to be quite exemplary in his handling of his royal authority over a vassal.

The King in Graelent is presented in a similar light to Arthur in Lanval. He, also, is not without fault in the fulfilment of his



seigniorial duties towards the hero. Yet, he, also, proves himself ultimately to be just as a king. When Graelent dishonours the Queen, and, therefore by association, the King, by refusing to acknowledge her as the most beautiful woman, the King threatens Graelent with life imprisonment, but offers him, nonetheless, a chance to prove his innocence.

Li rois comande c'on le prenge,  
n'avra de lui ne pais,  
de prison n'ist~~era~~ jamais,  
se cele n'est avant mostree  
que la biauté a tant loee.

Graelent 472-76.

The King does not allow personal anger to override his duty to ensure that justice is done. There is not the same amount of legalistic detail in the presentation of the trial of Graelent as in Lanval, but the motions of the court, presided over by the King, are indicated. Through the trial justice is done, and this specifically at the hands of the King, who accepts the evidence of the beauty of the fairy mistress as being greater than that of the Queen, and fully acquits Graelent.

Li rois meïsmes a jugié  
devant sa cort e otroié  
que Graelens est aquités,  
bien doit estre quites clamés.

Graelent 635-38.

The story line of Graelent and Lanval demands that the king should in both cases fulfil his role as justiciary in the trial of the hero. It is not, however, necessary for the sake of the narrative that it should be in such a manner beyond reproach that he fulfils this role. This is a factor that should be borne in mind when the negative aspects of the heroes' relationship with society is considered.

In those lais in which the description of the individual as lord or

king is only of the most general, the focus is generally on the extent of his appreciation of his vassals, or of one particular, favoured vassal.

This is the case in Desiré, in which the King is in particular shown in his relationship with Desiré, whom he greatly honours.

Li reis l'ama e tint mut cher,  
pus l'adoba a chevaler.

Desiré 67-68.

mut fu del rei ben receüz,  
mut le tint cher pur sa valor  
e mut li porta grant honor.

Desiré 86-88.

It is also the case in Eliduc, in which the King of Exeter rewards Eliduc for his services by granting him a position of importance in his household. The King of Brittany is also appreciative of Eliduc at the beginning of the lai, and after a lapse comes to appreciate him again for his worth. He then takes the initiative in restoring a good relationship between himself and his vassal.

Mut s'esteit sovent repentiz  
Que il de lui esteit partiz;

Eliduc 557-60.

Eliduc is, in his turn, also portrayed as a responsible lord in his relationship with his own vassals (Eliduc 72-74).

The King in Guingamor also reveals a highly developed sense of responsibility towards his men, and concern for their welfare. That he cares for his knights in general as well as his nephew Guingamor in particular is indicated by his grief over those who have disappeared while undertaking the hunt of the white boar. The King says: -

'Molt grant dommage i ai eü,  
'X. chevaliers i ai perdu'

Guingamor 179-80.

The image of Muldumarec as a good lord is proposed by his own vassals, but only in most general terms (Yonec 515-18).

More interesting is the way in which Gurun in Fresne acknowledges his seigniorial obligations. When urged to marry by his vassals, he not only accepts their general advice in this, but also their counsel as to whom he should marry. We shall see subsequently how important marriage is in social terms within this lai. Suffice it here to note that Gurun recognises that the fulfilment of his social obligations as a lord must have precedence over his personal feelings: in marrying the woman chosen for him by his vassals, Gurun must sacrifice his love for Fresne.

In Equitan, Equitan is also aware that his duty as a lord should override personal consideration. Thus he knows that it would be wrong for him to have a love affair with the wife of his seneschal, because to do so would be a betrayal of the bond of loyalty and confidence that is essential to this lord-vassal relationship. Equitan says to himself: -

'E si jo l'aim, jeo feral mal:  
Geo est la femme al seneschal;  
Garder li dei amur e fei  
Si cum jeo voil k'il face a mei.'  
Equitan 71-74.

Thus we see that the restrictions upon the relationship between Equitan and his vassal's wife are similar to those that exist between a vassal and the wife of his lord, such as we have seen in Lanval, Graelent and Guingamor.

In Tydorel we are offered a somewhat wider perspective of the role of a lord. Tydorel is presented as an effective lord not only in terms of his relationship with his own men, but also in terms of his

relationship with his neighbours. As a good king, he is loved by his people, but is also assertive enough to be feared by those who might otherwise be his enemies. This is one of the aspects of his role as defined before his birth by his father: -

'ne ja nul ne li fera guerre,  
toz ses voisins sormontera,'

Tydorel 118-19.

And Tydorel does, indeed, fulfil this: -

De Tydorel firent seignor.  
Onques n'orent eü meillor,  
tant preu, tant cortois, tant vaillant,  
tant large, ne tant despendant,  
ne miex tenist em pes la terre;  
nus ne li osa fere guerre.  
De puceles ert molt amez  
e de dames molt desirrez,  
li sien l'amoient e servoient,  
e li estrange le cremoient.

Tydorel 221-30.

Haveloc similarly asserts himself as a figure of authority once he has been restored to his throne of Denmark, actively bringing peace to the land over which he rules: -

En la terre bone pesmist.  
E des feluns justise fist.

Haveloc 975-76.

The Lai du Mantel is the only lai to offer the image of a woman fulfilling a social role equivalent to that of a lord. In this lai, the Queen is portrayed as one who distributes largesse among the ladies at court in the same way that the King does among the men.

S'en fist a chascune donner  
tant comme ele plus en volt prendre.

Mantel 46-47.

We see, then, from this survey of the role of the lord in the lais, that it is a role comprising as many obligations as that of a vassal. In the case of the lord/king, these obligations apply both on particular relationships with vassals directly serving him and in wider sense as an administrator of justice and enforcer of peace throughout his domain.

## 6. Good Lord-Vassal Relationship

For an individual to achieve fulfilment either as a lord or as a vassal much of the responsibility lies within himself. It is his duty to uphold certain values, to behave in a certain way, just as it is for him to fulfil to the best of his abilities his role as an active knight. In so doing he can be said to be fulfilling his social role, be it vassalic or seigniorial. The two roles are complementary, and, for the individual to achieve complete social fulfilment there must be interaction between himself and his lord and/or vassals. There must be a degree of reciprocity; the success of any such relationship is founded upon the need for this reciprocity.

This is indicated by the case of Lanval, to which we shall return in the following chapter. Despite Lanval's efforts to serve Arthur as a good vassal at the beginning of the lai, the degree of social fulfilment that is his is very limited because there is not this reciprocity in the lord-vassal relationship.

In many of the other lais, however, we do find such relationships that are by these terms wholly successful, with each partner equally committed to the upholding of the relationship.

This is the case in Eliduc, in the relationship between Eliduc and the King of Exeter: Eliduc helps the King to overcome his enemies and to restore peace to his land, and the King in return rewards him for his services. Each is equally dependent upon the other for the stability of his position within society. Eliduc would be without any position in courtly society if it were not for the King of Exeter, having been exiled from his own country. Equally the King

would be unable to rule effectively without Eliduc's assistance (Eliduc 89-549).

The relationship between lord and vassal is, thus, ideally one of mutual support, as exists here between Eliduc and the King of Exeter. It exists also at the beginning of the lai, between Eliduc and his other lord, the King of Brittany (Eliduc 741-44). In these episodes Eliduc achieves complete social fulfilment, both in terms of himself fulfilling his own role as vassal, and in enjoying the appreciation of his lord, and thereby being fully integrated into courtly society.

In Bisclavret, Bisclavret enjoys a fulfilling relationship with the King at the beginning of the lai (Bisclavret 15-20), and more particularly at the end of the lai, when there is much emphasis that exists between the two men (Bisclavret 300-04). It is obvious within the context of the lai that Bisclavret is deserving of such an integrated position in chivalric society by virtue of his own qualities, he is nonetheless, dependent upon the King for his actual achievement of it. This is equally true for Melion, who, whatever his personal qualities, is reliant upon the generosity and mercy of the King for his reintegration into society.

Such a balance between the qualities of the vassal and the appreciation and goodness of the lord exists in Guingamor, between Guingamor and the King. It is made clear at the beginning of the lai that this is a particularly close relationship (Guingamor 13-14). It is a relationship that continues throughout the lai to be of much importance to Guingamor, based on mutual love and respect as much as it is on obligation. This is the ideal basis for a

lord-vassal relationship.

At the beginning of Desiré, Desiré enjoys a similarly close relationship with his king, which allows him to be totally socially fulfilled at this stage in the lai (Desiré 62-68). Desiré enjoys another period of such social fulfilment later in the lai, after he has been roused from his incapacitating depression by the visit of his mistress. Desiré then becomes active again in his participation in society, and the King responds by making clear his love for him: -

Li rais l'aime par grant amur,  
ne part de lui ne nuit ne jor.  
Desiré 417-18.

There is such a closeness between Tyolet and Arthur in Tyolet, with Tyolet as a keen and energetic vassal, whose services are much appreciated by the King (Tyolet 285-320; 621-28). Tyolet, thus, like Desiré, has every chance of social fulfilment and integration, both because of his own virtues and because of the King's love for him.

This image of the balanced lord-vassal relationship based on reciprocity and an equality of commitment both to upholding the standards of good social behaviour in general and to the particular relationship, appears with much frequency throughout the lais, as in Guigemar (43-48), in Espine (209-18; 475-84), as well as in others. It is clearly an ideal situation, as the social relationship par excellence.

It is, we have seen, primarily the domain of the male characters in the lais. We do, however, get insight into the fact that such relationships could exist also between women. In Fresne, we find an example of a well balanced and positive relationship between

Fresne's mother and her dameisele: -

La dame aveit une meschine  
Ki mut esteit de franche orine;  
Lung tens l'ot garde e nurie  
E mut amee e mut cherie.

Fresne 99-102.

The nature of the services rendered by the dameisele to her mistress might be different from those of a vassal to his lord. There is, nonetheless, the same emphasis on reciprocity as the basis of their relationship, with the young girl well rewarded for her services for the lady, as when she takes the baby Fresne away: -

Si cel service li feseit,  
Bon gueredun de li avreit.

Fresne 119-20.

There is also an indication of closeness between the fairy mistress and her handmaidens in Lanval (70-81; 485-94), and more markedly in the relationship between Desiré's mistress and the dameisele whom Desiré first meets (Desiré 150-96; 681-88). What is crucial to each of these relationships, whether between men or women, is the balance that draws both partners close together and allows each of them to achieve complete social fulfilment within it. This equilibrium is dependent not only on each fulfilling his/her ascribed role in terms of particular obligations and responsibilities, but also on there being a genuine bond of mutual appreciation and affection between them<sup>17</sup>.

## 7. Marriage as a Social Institution

The ideal image of marriage as presented in the lais is not without a consideration of personal feelings, as will be seen in Chapter IV. The marriage ceremonies at the conclusion of Fresne, Desiré and Milun, for instance are certainly the celebration and consummation of love relationships. Marriage is, nonetheless, in many of the lais, presented as a social institution, in reflection of the



reality of the time<sup>18</sup>. Marriages were commonly contracted for political and economic reasons, to unite powerful families and so enhance their power. The feelings of the individuals were of little relevance in the choice of a spouse; such personal emotions were secondary to the obligations of the individual to society. The benefits of a politically and economically desirable marriage extended beyond the two individuals and families involved. The marriage of two powerful families affected the whole of society dependant upon them, the stability generated by marriage having wide repercussions. Much of this stability was based on the essential function of the marriage, that of producing heirs. It was for the sake of reproduction that the Church condoned marriage, and it was for this purpose also that desirable marriages were sought for social reasons. The society of Northern France and England moved inexorably at this period towards a system based on inheritance. The landowner may still owe allegiance directly to his overlord, but his fief did not automatically revert to his lord at the time of his death to be re-allocated but was inherited by his son<sup>19</sup>. Such a system allowed for a greater social stability, so long as the lord or fief-holder married and had a legitimate heir to perpetuate the lineage and the social status quo. The absence of such an heir would open the way to the strife of inheritance squabbles.

It is with a sense of the need for Gurun to have an heir that his vassals approach him in Fresne. They urge him to marry, and this specifically as a vassalic concern that their lord fulfil his responsibilities to them. If he fails to marry he will be failing in his obligations as a lord<sup>20</sup>. The vision of marriage as presented by them is most emphatically as a social institution, with no concern for personal feelings. This is made particularly clear by

the context, as the marriage proposed by the vassals for Gurun demands of him the sacrifice of the woman he loves. The criteria by which the vassals assess the desirability of this marriage are clearly stated. These are the criteria that are of general social acceptance, with particular emphasis on the need for an heir: -

Soventefeiz a lui parlerent  
Qu'une gentil femme espusast  
E de cele se delivrast;  
Lié sereient s'il eüst heir  
Ki après lui peüst aveir  
Sa terē e sun heritage.  
Trop i avreient grant damage  
Si il laissast pur sa suinant  
Que d'espuse n'eüst enfant.

Fresne 316-24.

Gurun acknowledges the validity of these criteria in agreeing to marry the woman of their choice. In so doing he recognises that social obligations must take precedence over his personal feelings. The woman chosen by the vassals is Codre, desirable because she is the daughter of a noble family, also because of her potential fruitfulness, as is specifically indicated by Gurun's men:

'En la codre ad noiz e deduiz,'

Fresne 339.

These are the central concerns in the choice of a wife by social terms: her family background, her ability to produce an heir, rather than her personal qualities, although these can be assumed by virtue of her noble birth.

That Gurun's marriage to Codre is deemed socially acceptable allows also for the acceptability by the same standards of his marriage to Fresne, once it has been discovered that she too is a daughter of the same family as Codre. And although the marriage is primarily presented as a love match, it is also specifically desirable as a social union, bringing to Gurun a fine dowry: -

Aprés ad s'amie espusee;

E li peres li ad donee,  
Ki mutot~~ves~~ li bon curage:  
Par mi li part sun heritage!

Fresne 505-08

Thus, in Fresne, we find an extremely clear exposition of the criteria by which a marriage would be judged socially desirable, in reality as well as within the context of this particular lai.

In Desiré also, there is an emphasis on the importance of reproduction as an aspect central to the success of a marriage by the standards of society<sup>21</sup>. The marriage between Desiré's parents is a good one, with the couple well suited in terms of social status. But for the marriage to be wholly fulfilled there is need for a child, as is indicated by their desire for one before the birth of Desiré: -

Feme aveit solunc sun parage,  
assez l'amot, k'ele ert sage.  
De ce lur est mesavenu  
k'ensemble n'unt enfant eü;  
a merveilles en sunt dolent  
e a Deu priënt mut sovent,  
par sa pité les confortast  
ke fiz ou file lur donast.

Desiré 17-24.

It is as a result of the birth of this longed for son that their marriage becomes the image of the ideal match, fulfilling its function within society.

In Tydorel also, we see how a marriage can achieve consummate fulfilment, in social if not personal terms, through the birth of an heir. After ten years of a childless marriage, the King of Brittany is thrilled when his wife gives birth to the child who will be his heir, without realising that Tydorel is not in fact his own son (Tydorel 15-178)<sup>22</sup>.

Doon also perceives the role of marriage as being for the sake of an heir. Seeking no personal fulfilment in his marriage with the proud princess, he leaves her after only three days of matrimony, apparently feeling himself to have fulfilled his role by leaving his wife pregnant with a son (Doon 161-91).

Doon is also interesting in its focusing on the particular importance of marriage for an heiress.

A noble woman in medieval society received none of the training that would allow her to fulfil an active role in that society in the same way that her male counterpart would. It was, therefore, almost exclusively through marriage that she was expected to play her role in society, as a wife and often more importantly as the mother of her husband's children<sup>23</sup>. The fulfilment of this role demanded that she be a passive figure, a pawn moved between her own family and the family of her husband<sup>24</sup>. Her value as a pawn in this marriage game depended largely on the political and economic benefits she brought, along with her youth and child-bearing potential, as we have seen in Fresne. A woman who was in her own right an heiress, in a family in which there was no male heir, was the most valuable pawn of all. There were other reasons why there were particular pressures on a woman in such circumstances to marry. The necessity in social terms for her to marry lay not only in the need for her to produce an heir, but in the more immediate need for her to have a husband, who could assume the role of lord over her lands and defend her rights and those of her people.

This is the situation of the proud princess in Doon, who is justifiably urged by her people to marry. Aware of her intrinsic

value as an heiress, she has the opportunity and the right to be selective, to choose only the knight who proves himself worthiest of her. It is for this reason that she sets a marriage trial to test her suitors. But once a man has succeeded in this trial, and has established beyond doubt his worthiness to be her husband, it becomes her social duty to marry him. It is, indeed, made clear that she perceives her marriage to Doon not at all in terms of personal fulfilment but wholly as the fulfilment of her obligations to her people.

Cele nu pot avant mener,  
toz ses barons a fet mander.  
Par lor conseil a Doon pris,  
seignor l'a fet de son païs.

Doon 157-60.

The girl in Deus Amanz is also an heiress, and she also is faced with the social obligation to marry. Thus, although reluctant to let his daughter go, her father is aware of the **social** pressures on him to find a suitable husband for her (Deus Amanz 21-46).

This need for an heiress to be provided with a suitable husband is most particularly stressed in Haveloc. Argentille is the daughter and rightful heir of King Achebrit. As an unmarried woman, she is unable to govern her lands herself, and this responsibility is entrusted to her uncle Edelsi until a husband is found for Argentille, Achebrit made Edelsi pledge that he would marry her to the most powerful man in the country. It is of this pledge that Argentille's men remind Edelsi when she is of marriageable age. In so doing, they specifically point to those reasons whereby in social terms marriage is necessary, both for her kingdom to be well governed during her lifetime and so that she can have children who will govern it after her death. Like Gurun's men, they have no

interest in the personal side of marriage, for them its importance lies wholly in its social implications.

La meschine ki fu sa fille,  
Ki ja esteit creue e granz  
E ben poeit aveir enfanz.  
Le rei en unt a reisun mis  
E de sa nece l'unt requis  
K'a tel home la mariast  
Kis maïtenist e conseillast

Haveloc 288-94.

Edelsi is also fully aware that it is a social necessity for a suitable husband to be chosen for Argentille, as he acknowledges: -

'Quant Achebrit li reis fina  
E sa fille me comanda,  
Un serement me fist jurer,  
Veant sa gent, e after  
K'al plus fort home la doreie  
K'en la terre trover [poreie].'

Haveloc 323-28.

Edelsi fulfils his obligations to Argentille according to the letter of her father's instructions, although contrary to the spirit of them in marrying her not to the man of greatest effective power in the country but to the man of greatest physical strength, Haveloc. It is ironic that this marriage, despite Edelsi's intentions, should prove itself the most perfect motive there could be in social as well as personal terms. By birth Haveloc is ideally suited to her as the son of a king, and it is through her marriage to him that her crown is reclaimed for her. For Haveloc also it is this marriage that allows him to be restored to his own rightful position in society. Thus, it is in this case very easy to define the positive consequences in social terms of this arranged marriage, affecting both Haveloc and Argentille and their subjects, who as a result of it are freed from the rule of usurpers.

In other lais the social necessity for an individual to marry is indicated in more general terms, the circumstances being less

extreme.

This is the case in Guigemar, in which Guigemar is reminded of his responsibilities in this direction by his friends: -

Femme voleient qu'il preisist,  
Guigemar 645.

In Equitan also there are social pressures on Equitan to marry, and criticisms because of his unwillingness to do so.

Il ne voleit nule espuser;  
Ja n'en rovast oïr parler.  
La gent le tindrent mut a mal,  
Equitan 199-201.

Here again we see clearly that the marriage of a lord is not simply of concern to himself, but also of public concern, with his people entitled to make demands upon him. Both Equitan and in particular his mistress are aware that it is indeed his duty to take a suitable wife. Ideally such a marriage should be to a social equivalent, the daughter of a king (Equitan 215-17). It is in recognition of the justice of the demands of his people, that Equitan makes the decision to marry his mistress, in an attempt to satisfy both his social obligations and his personal desires, even though the means to such a marriage is the murder of his seneschal (Equitan 223-34).

Dané in Narcisus is equally aware that it will be her duty to marry a man who is considered by society to be suitable as a match. She says to herself: -

'Fille [e]s de roïne et de roi:  
Segnor te donront endroit toi'  
Narcisus 269-70.

It is with her own particular awareness of her elevated social status (noted in Chapter I), that she tries to assess the possibility of Narcisus's being an acceptable husband by the standards of society. In so doing she is affirming the authority of

society in determining the choice of a husband for her, a choice based on criteria that pay no need to her personal feelings<sup>25</sup>.

She says to herself: -

'Se cil que je tant ain m'amast  
U se estoit qui en parlast  
Et mes peres [le] consentoit,  
Bien le porroie avoir par droit,  
Més n'est pas drois que jel requiere.  
Assés somes d'une maniere,  
D'une biauté et d'un eage;  
Se nous ne sommes d'un parage,  
Il est assés de haute gent,  
Si ne sommes mie parent.'

Narcisus 341-50.

Thus Dané fully acquiesces to her passive role in the question of marriage and is willing to submit to the choice of a husband made for her by her father.

It is in Vair Palefroi that we meet a father who is most assertive in his perception of marriage purely in terms of its being a means to advance his own social ambitions. The desirability of his daughter as a bride is presented solely in terms of his wealth which will be her inheritance: -

Fille ert a un prince vaillant;  
Richece n'aloit pas faillant  
En lui, ainz ert d'avoir molt riches,  
Et si avoit dedenz ses liches.  
Mil livres valoit bien sa terre  
Chascun an, et sovent requerre  
Li venoit on sa fille gente,

Vair Palefroi 83-89.

It is in such materialistic terms that the girl's father judges her value on the marriage market, and his sole criteria for assessing the suitability of a suitor for her hand is his wealth, as is evident from his rejection of Guillaume for being too poor (Vair Palefroi 74-75). It is above all in his acceptance of Guillaume's aged but very wealthy uncle to be his son-in-law, that he reveals



the extent to which personal considerations are nothing to him and social ambitions all in the matter of his daughter's marriage.

In Milun also it is obvious that social considerations are dominant in determining the choice of a husband for the lady as made by her father.

Sis peres li duna barun,  
Un mut riche humme del país,  
Mut esforcible e de grant pris.

Milun 124-26.

In this case, however, it is not only wealth that *is* the basis for this choice, but also the power and social position of the suitor. This is a marriage that is clearly perfectly acceptable by the standards of society, and probably very typical of many actual arranged marriages of the period. It is, however, not presented as an ideal marriage within the context of the lai. Here the image of the ideal marriage appears as that between Milun and the lady that takes place later in the lai (Milun 527-30). It is never explained why Milun and the lady cannot marry at an earlier stage in their relationship, apart from the fact that it is the lady's duty to wait passively for a match to be arranged for her by her father. It must be assumed that Milun, although an exemplary knight, does not at the beginning of the story possess sufficient wealth or social status to impress her father as a possible suitor. It can also be assumed that by the end of the lai his success in tournaments has enhanced his social position. Thus the marriage that eventually takes place between Milun and the lady is no less socially acceptable than that between her and her first husband, but far more acceptable by the terms applied by Marie in her lais because it includes another dimension, which is love.

In the lais in general it is such marriages in which there is a coincidence of social acceptability and personal happiness which is the ideal. This is the case, we have seen, with the marriage between Gurun and Fresne. It applies equally to other marriages that appear primarily as love matches.

In Desiré, it is Desiré's mistress who is particularly concerned with establishing the suitability of her marriage to Desiré by the standards of society. It is for this reason that she comes to the royal court at Calatir to ask for the King's permission for this marriage, pointing to their compatibility in terms of their equivalence of social status (Desiré 697-744).

Equally when the daughter of the King of Ireland, in Melion, comes to Melion and offers herself in marriage, it is not only her love that she refers to, but also the suitability of her elevated social status (Melion 105-10). The marriage that ensues is, for a while at least, a successful and fruitful one, with two sons born (Melion 127-32).

Other marriages that are presented as successful equally in social and in personal terms are to be found in a number of other lais. It is in such terms that the marriage between Eliduc and Guildeluec is first presented (Eliduc 5-12), with as much emphasis on the factors that make it socially acceptable as on their love. This can be compared with the marriage between Bisclavret and his wife as it exists at the beginning of that lai (Bisclavret 21-23); also with that between the young couple in the Lai de l'Espine. This takes place with the King's blessing at the end of the lai (Espine 493-96), but it is anticipated even in the initial description of

the young couple. In this it is made clear how well suited they are, in their love, and in their beauty, and also in their equivalent social status (Espine 15-38): -

Andui furent de haut parage,  
Espine 27.

That a couple should be well suited by the standards of society is never disputed in the *lais* as a vital basis to a marriage. The ideal marriage as presented in these texts is one that is a fusion of their personal aspirations of the couple and of the requirements of society. However, as we see here some of the marriages that appear in the stories exist purely in social terms, arranged by the parents of the bride as a means of fulfilling their own social ambitions. The aspect of personal fulfilment to be achieved through marriage will be considered in Chapter IV.

#### 8. Monastic Life

It was noted in the previous chapter how small a part is played in the *lais* by religion, either in terms of personal devotion or in terms of the institution of the Church. In the reality of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the actual relationship between the individual and God might have been a personal concern, the Christian Church, nonetheless, played a very obvious social role. It was very far from being the case that only those with a strong sense of vocation took up religious orders. These appeared in many cases as an obvious alternative to other forms of participation in society, and were generally accepted as having this role. For the stability of society it was often desirable for younger sons with no chance of inheriting a fief to enter the Church. Equally a monastic existence was chosen for unmarried daughters, infertile wives and

widows as often for reasons of social expediency as because of personal inclination<sup>26</sup>. Many religious houses were founded in this period by noble ladies, offering a lifestyle not so very different from that to be experienced by them in secular society<sup>27</sup>. For such reasons the choice by an individual of a monastic life was not necessarily a withdrawal from society, but almost for some members of the aristocracy as an alternative within society. It is because of this that the consideration of how such an alternative is presented in the *lais* appears in this chapter.

It is, in fact, only in Eliduc that the possibility of monastic life is presented in such a light, with Eliduc, Guildeluec and Guilliadun all choosing to end their lives in monasteries.

For the sake of the narrative it is almost an imperative that Guildeluec should make such a decision. It is her becoming a nun that allows Eliduc to marry Guilliadun; apparently a case of a religious solution for reasons of social expediency, although it is nonetheless uncertain whether the Church would have condoned Eliduc's remarriage in such circumstances<sup>28</sup>. Guildeluec's becoming a nun is not, however, presented in negative terms as a withdrawal from society, but as a positive decision based on a will to serve God: -

Nune voelt estre, Deu servir;  
Eliduc 1124.

She is certainly not opting for a life of isolation given over exclusively to reflection; she founds a convent in which she lives with other nuns and where she is ultimately joined by Guilliadun. The active nature of her role as a nun is indicated by her instructing Guilliadun how best to serve God: -

De Deu servir l'amonesta  
E sun ordre li ensaina.

Eliduc 1169-70.

As a teacher she is still living in relation to others. In effect she is establishing an alternative society in which to find a different kind of fulfilment from that to be found in marriage (Eliduc 1125-44), in the way of many noble women. Such a decision is also consistent with the unselfishness which has been evident in the presentation of Guilideluoc's character throughout the lai.

The decision by Eliduc and Guilliadun also to enter monasteries appears somewhat differently. With absolutely no circumstances in the narrative to impose such a decision upon them, it appears unequivocally as a positive step, a fitting and socially desirable culmination to active lives spent in society. Neither is the religious note introduced solely at the end of the lai, to appear incongruously as a means of tying up loose ends. Already, on an earlier occasion, Eliduc proclaimed his intention of becoming a monk, this at the time when Guilliadun has fallen into her death-like trance from which it seems unlikely she will ever recover. Then Eliduc says: -

'Le jur que jeovus enfuirai,  
Ordre de moigne recevrai;  
Sur vostre tumber chescun jur  
Feraï refreindre ma dolur.'

Eliduc 947-50.

There can be no doubt as the sincerity of his grief, but in such circumstances the decision to become a monk as a gesture of mourning is a negative one, primarily a renunciation of seeking fulfilment in society and in life at all. Certainly in this period of his grief over the apparent death of Guilliadun his religious devotion appears as an act of self-isolation, a substitute for a more active role in society and a repudiation of such a role.

La messe oeit bien par matin,  
Puis se meteit suls al chemin;  
El bois alot, a la chapele,  
La u giseit la dameisele.

Eliduc 965-68.

His turning to religion at this time appears, then, as an escape from the reality of his unhappy plight in society in which he cannot grieve openly for the loss of his mistress.

The contrast between his situation there and the circumstances of his finally becoming a monk reinforces the positive of that final decision. He and Guilliadun choose a monastic existence not as an escape from unhappiness in their existence in the world. On the contrary, it is from a situation of happiness in marriage that they decide to devote themselves to a relationship with God transcending even their own conjugal love.

In such a context, the opting by all three main characters of Eliduc for a monastic existence appears as a fitting culmination to their lives in society, and not at all as a rejection of society or of the value of achieving fulfilment in society: it is simply an extension of such fulfilment. It must also be noted that even while physically separated in their different monasteries, Eliduc and his two wives continue to communicate and to support each other. Thus their monastic existence does not in any way imply either a repudiation of the relationships that have existed between them in society.

It is with this presentation of monastic life that not only Eliduc but the whole collection of Marie's lais is brought to an end. It is possible to assume that this was originally the last lai in the collection<sup>29</sup> and, therefore, that Marie intended her reader to take

away as a final thought, the notion, expressed nowhere else in her *lais*, that fulfilment in a loving marriage can be transcended by a relationship with God.

The only other monastery to appear in Marie's *lais* is that in which Fresne receives her upbringing, an upbringing that is clearly suitable for a young girl of noble birth. This indicates a very direct way in which monasteries fulfilled a role in society, as places of education for the children of the nobility. Such an education ensures that Fresne as a foundling will have a chance of being in the social milieu to which she is suited by birth, but which remains closed to her for so long as her noble identity is not formally recognised. Thus we see the important role that monasteries can play in enabling an individual to develop the social skills and graces that will be a basis for achieving fulfilment in aristocratic society. There is, however, no question in the context of this *lai* of Fresne's remaining beyond girlhood within the confines of the convent, social fulfilment for her being achieved ultimately through her marriage to Gurun. Her monastic life is, thus, only a transitional, but, nonetheless, essential stage in her passage towards social fulfilment.

The alternative of marriage and a monastic life is, however, proposed in Haveloc, the only other *lai* in which there is any reference to such a lifestyle. In this case the possibility of Argentille's becoming a nun is dismissed as highly unsuitable. The reason for its being suggested is as a means to preventing her from ever asserting her rights to the throne (Haveloc 315-20). Certainly her situation defines that such a possibility has none of the desirability or justification that it has for Guildeluec and

Guilliadun. They are ladies who have lived long in society and who have enjoyed married life, monastic life for them is a culmination of an active existence in the world; for Argentille at this stage it would be a substitute for any more active role in society. For her, as for Fresne, social fulfilment is to be found in marriage; and for Argentille there is a further role in society that it is her duty to fulfil, that of queenship.

Thus the rejection of monastic life as a possibility for the young heroines of Fresne and Haveloc does not necessarily imply a rejection of the value of such an existence in general terms, but in this particular context. The desirability in social terms of monastic life appears, then, to depend to a large extent on the age of the individual: in a positive light when it is a culmination of an active social life, but not as a substitute for such a life. The demands of the narrative context must also be acknowledged as playing a part in defining which characters will opt for such an alternative existence.

#### 9. The Hermit

There are few conventional Church figures in the lais, and those who do appear are too shadowy to be assessed in terms of their degree of participation in society - the priests in Desiré and Yonec, the archbishop in Fresne. There are, however, some more enlightening references to hermits, in Eliduc, Haveloc and Desiré. In all three lais, the figure of the hermit is one who lives not in society itself, but who has direct contact with individuals from society, and who, therefore, never become totally estranged or isolated from society or its values.



In Haveloc, Argentille turns to the hermit for an interpretation of her dream about Haveloc. The role of the hermit here is not so much to introduce a Christian dimension to the lai, as to enable Haveloc to discover his royal identity and thereby to commence his return to his rightful position in society (Haveloc 495-539). The hermit predicts: -

'Il serra reis e tu reïne.'

Haveloc 528.

Thus, although the interpretation that the hermit offers is in no way a Christian one, it is presumably with the insight with which he is endowed as a man of God that he fulfils a role that is directly of positive significance in social terms for the protagonists of the lai.

In Desiré, the hermit appears in a very different context. He represents conventional Church morality which he propounds to Desiré, and as such he becomes aligned with society, although living apart from it physically. Thus it is that he dogmatically condemns the relationship between Desiré and his mistress, erecting the prohibition on this love, such as we find often in the other lais applied directly by those of authority in society. His views might be acceptable by the standards of society, but are contrary to those standards upheld through the lai. His conventional Christian morality is not the religious solution to be drawn from the lai, the solution offered appears rather as an attempt to reconcile such Christian principles and extra-marital love.

In Eliduc, although the hermit does not himself appear, there are references to his lifestyle and his role. He has lived in a chapel in a deep forest (Eliduc 890-94; 909-11). He has thus lived in

physical seclusion from normal society, but not without contact with it, as we are told that Eliduc has often talked with him: -

Meinte feiz ot od lui parlē.

Eliduc 894.

This brief description points to the most basic factors that characterise the hermit of the literature of the period<sup>30</sup>, and possibly the hermit of contemporary reality. He lives in physical isolation from society, but not in total abstinence from the comforts of civilisation. He lives, after all in a chapel, rather than in the total exposure of the wilderness as Bisclavret and Melion are forced to do. He also retains direct contact with society through the individuals who turn to him for solace or advice as to how to direct their lives within society. Thus the relationship that the hermit has with society is an ambiguous one, but, at least in the *lais*, his role can be seen as one that has a degree of social significance in the extent of his effecting the existence in society of others.

#### 10. The Real World

If the personal behaviour of an individual is a crucial factor in determining his/her chances of fulfilment in society, so too is the nature of his/her environment. The most basic requirement of this is that it be in the Real World, corresponding to the basic necessity for the individual to be fully a member of that world.

It is in the Real World that the individual receives his training to be a knight and that he establishes his relationships with his lord, his peers and his vassals. It is also in the Real World that he is able to achieve fulfilment in these roles. This is, therefore, the

natural environment for the individual as a social being, providing him with the basic framework in which to enjoy social fulfilment, with its responsibilities and its benefits. In many of the *lais* this is presented without comment as the natural environment in which the story is set.

In a number of *lais*, however, there is a more specific emphasis placed on the extent to which the fact of being in the Real World defines the degree of social fulfilment attainable by the individual.

In *Tyolet* it is in order to prove his right through merit to a position in this society that Tyolet undertakes the hunt for the stag with the white hoof. Arthur's court is self-evidently a part of the Real World, whereas the forest in which Tyolet has been brought up and the forest in which he undertakes the hunt can be identified with the Other World. Certainly it is only in the Real World as represented by Arthur's court, that Tyolet is able to achieve success as a knight and in his relationships with the other knights of the Round Table, the court appears then as the centre of chivalric society, in contrast to the wilderness of the two forests.

In *Guigemar*, there is also a contrast between those episodes in which ~~the hero~~ <sup>he</sup> is integrated into normal chivalric society and those when he is more involved with seeking fulfilment in love which takes him to the '*antive cité*'. This is reached through a forest and across a sea. Although not specifically defined as the Other World, any more than are the forests in *Tyolet*, it sets in relief the image of chivalric society as represented by Guigemar's own country and by Meriaduc's domain. It is only in this environment that Guigemar has a chance to exercise his knightly skills, both at the beginning of

the lai, and at the end in his decisive defeat of Meriaduc (Guigemar 744-880). The active life that he leads in the environment, in which he establishes his social reputation as a knight, certainly appears in opposition to his idleness in knightly terms while in the 'antive cité'.

In Lanval it is again the court of King Arthur that appears firmly as the centre of chivalric society in the Real World. In this lai the Other World, which is presented as contrast to it, is specifically named, Avalun (Lanval 641). As in Guigemar, the dichotomy exists between the Real World of Arthur's court as being the only place where Lanval can hope to achieve fulfilment and the Other World in which fulfilment in love is to be found. This opposition between Real World/social fulfilment and Other World/fulfilment in love exists similarly in Graelent, also in Desiré and in Guingamor. In the Lai du Trot there is the contrast between the royal court to which Lorois really belongs, and the forest in which he meets the ladies, an Other World that seems to be the After Life. In Espine it is the 'Gué de l'Espine' at which the young hero fights against the three strong knights which appears as the border with the Other World. The stability and justice of the court as represented by the behaviour of the King towards the young knight establish this as the right and natural environment in which he can exist and achieve social fulfilment through his activities as a knight and his socially acceptable, as well as personally desired, marriage.

In Desiré, there is a particular emphasis on the social significance for the individual of being in the Real World, not only through Desiré's own experiences, which as noted are similar to those of

Lanval and Graellent, but more specifically through Desiré's children. It is in order that they should be fully integrated into noble, knightly society ~~that~~ their mother, herself a being from the Other World, brings them to the royal court to which Desiré belongs. She defines the roles that they will fulfil in this society — as knight and married lady; these are social roles that, it is indicated, can only be fulfilled in this Real World context.

It is, however, in Guingamor that the social significance of the Real World is most focused upon, in a way that sets it apart from those other lais with which it is often compared, Lanval, Graelent and Desiré. Here again the Real World is represented by the royal court of which their hero is an active and well appreciated member at the beginning of the lai. This is the social environment that is natural to Guingamor, and if he leaves it to venture into the mysterious and perilous depths of the forest, it is specifically to enable him to return with a greater claim to a position and a reputation within that society. During his period of absence from the Real World, he repeatedly insists on his desire to return to it (Guingamor 402-78; 545-48). It is in particular to his relationship with the King that he refers, but the extent to which he has in general terms been fully integrated into the society of the Real World, and not exclusively that of the court, is demonstrated by the number of people of all social strata who have accompanied him to the edge of the forest. They have not dared to come into the forest with Guingamor for fear of the dangers in it, but even when Guingamor has experienced the luxuries of the Other World, he remains determined to return to the Real World (Guingamor 503-538). It is particularly obvious through Guingamor's perception of it that the Real World exists not only in physical terms, but with a social

significance.

Guingamor returns to the Real World, but not to the courtly chivalric society or to the particular social relationships that he left behind and that were the reasons for his wanting to return. The Real World to which he returns, although in spatial terms the same, is not the one he left, transformed in the three hundred years of his absence. Not only have the people he knew died, but the whole of the civilised society, to which he has belonged, has been decimated. The Real World to which he returns no longer has the reality in social terms that was significant to him, in this World, transformed by temporal displacement, he can have no hope of achieving the social fulfilment that was crucial to him.

Guingamor is unique among the lais to present society in the Real World in such terms, as existing within time as well as space. Here it is not only the fact of being physically in the Real World that enables the individual to achieve the social fulfilment to which he aspires and that is rightfully his; it is being at a particular time in a particular social context within that World that determines his chances in this direction.

Even in this case, the contrast between the Real World and the Other World is maintained as a significant one in terms of the possibility of achieving such social fulfilment. The Real World, here as in the other lais, is the natural environment for the individual. It is only there that he can actively fulfil his socially defined roles and that he can participate in social relationships.

Existence in the Real World is, however, only one of the conditions

necessary as a basis for the individual's social fulfilment. In itself it does not ensure the achievement of such fulfilment this is possible only when there is a convergence of desirable conditions.

#### 11. Native Country

The boundaries that define the distinction between the Real World and the Other World are not always clearly indicated, and seem to vary somewhat from lai to lai. The Real World is, nonetheless, often shown to encompass an area wider than that simply of the native country of the protagonists. Indeed, in a number of the lais a degree of physical mobility is portrayed as the social norm and desirable in social terms as a means for a young knight to develop his skills and establish his reputation. The fact of the individual's being in his own country is not, therefore, an essential factor in defining the degree of social fulfilment that he can enjoy.

There are, however, a number of lais in which this does acquire a greater significance for an individual as a part of his social fulfilment.

This is most evidently the case in Haveloc. It is only by returning to his own country, Denmark, that Haveloc can assert his rights to the throne, and thus fulfil his natural role in society. It must, nonetheless, be noted that, having secured his crown, Haveloc is subsequently able to travel to England again without endangering his status in Denmark. It is not the physical fact of being in his own country that is the decisive factor, but in certain circumstances is a contributory factor in Haveloc's social fulfilment.

Eliduc is another exile for whom the return to his own country is essential if he is to achieve complete social fulfilment. As we have seen, however, Eliduc may appear to be integrated into society in the service of the King of Exeter, his primary allegiance remains to the King of Brittany. He considers his sojourn in England as only temporary, hence his fetching Guillidun in order to take her back to Brittany with him. It is Brittany that throughout the lai remains his real home, the true basis for his existence as a social being, as knight, vassal and lord over his own lands, however much his life at the court of Exeter might in many ways seem to be a substitute.

It is in Lanval, for a hero who is actually away from his own country, that the potential significance in social terms of being in one's own country is most stressed. For Lanval to be in his own country would ensure that his rightful social position was acknowledged, his abilities as a knight appreciated and his rights upheld by his family and friends (Lanval 27-28; 398-99). Thus the significance of this concept of native country appears not so much in geographical terms as in terms of social relationships.

## 12. The Nature of Society

The importance for the individual of being in a particular social context has already to some extent been indicated in relation to Guingamor. Civilised society exists in the lais in opposition to wilderness, often centred on a royal court or a seigniorial household, a reflection of the reality of noble society in the twelfth century<sup>31</sup>. It is in such a social environment as this that the protagonists of the lais can hope to achieve social fulfilment.



It is in the Vair Palefroi that we find the clearest topographical representation of a country as pockets of civilisation, separated from each other by expanses of forest or heathland. In this case the country is Champagne, and the pockets of civilisation are those in which Guillaume and the woman he loves live, with particular emphasis on the inimical wilderness that separates them: -

Avoit en la forest parfonde,  
Qui granz estoit a la roonde,  
Un sentier fet, qui n'estoit mie  
Hantez d'omme qui fust en vie  
Se de lui non tant seulement.

Vair Palefroi 117-21.

A similar image of society appearing as pockets of civilisation separated by forest appears in Fresne. Fresne's parents live in one such pocket, in a castle, and Fresne is taken through a thick forest to another, the convent in which she is brought up (Fresne 135-76). What is particularly interesting in Fresne is that the society within this latter pocket is not presented as a homogeneous entity. We are given an insight into three different kinds of social existence. First Fresne is given hospitality by the porter and his daughter. Of a humble social status, they realise that they cannot provide Fresne with an upbringing that would be socially acceptable for a child of noble birth (Fresne 177-215). The convent in which she is brought up offers her a more suitable social environment, as we have seen (Fresne 216-70). It is, however, only once she goes to live with Gurun that she finds herself in what is her natural social context, the seigniorial household, in which she can ultimately achieve the degree of social fulfilment that is rightfully hers, through marriage to Gurun (Fresne 271-508).

In Haveloc also an image of different levels of society emerges. It is the royal court into which Haveloc is born that is his natural

social milieu, as the son of a king, and it is ultimately at this level of society that he is destined ultimately to achieve social fulfilment. It is with an awareness that a royal court is a more suitable environment for Haveloc than the fisherman's community in which he has been brought up that Grim sends the young crownless king to Edelsi's court. This provides him with the first contact with society at a level that is desirable for him. It is here also that he first begins to build up a reputation, appreciated by those around him for his physical strength and his personal qualities of character (Havelock 243-82). It is, therefore in this court society that Haveloc takes his first steps towards assuming his rightful social position. The court, presided over by the usurper Edelsi, is, however, a corrupt one, and it is not in this setting that Haveloc or Argentille can be fulfilled in their social roles, as king and queen, at least not until Edelsi has been overthrown and justice reasserted.

We see from both Fresne and Haveloc that the social fulfilment of the noble/royal protagonists of the lais is dependent not only on their living within the confines of society in the wide sense as it exists in opposition to the wilderness. Their intrinsic social status demands that they should be able to participate in a particular social milieu, for Fresne a noble household, for Haveloc a royal court. In Haveloc, we see also the importance that the character of the court has in determining the chances of social fulfilment for the individual. The corrupt character of Edelsi's court is determined by the character of Edelsi himself. In other lais we see a similar relationship between king and court.

This is the case in both Cor and Mantel. In both, the King and his

court are initially presented in a favourable light (Mantel 6-89; Cor 5-33). King Arthur in his apparent goodness (Mandel 49; Cor 5), might set the tone for the court, but the quality of the court is defined also by all the other members of it.

A la Pentecoste en esté  
tint li rois Artus cort pleniére.  
Onques rois en nule maniere  
nule si tres riche ne tint;  
de maint lointien païs i vint  
maint roi et maint duc e maint conte,  
Mantel 6-11.

Mout riche esteit la feste  
[si] cum conte nostre geste.  
[kar] trente mil[e] chevaler  
i sitre[nt] [cel jour] au menger,  
e trente mil[e] puceles,  
[q] dames ke damoiseles.  
Ce fust [tres] grant merveille:  
Cor 9-15.

A good court is, then, the sum of its parts, including its king. This remains true for the court of King Arthur in Cor and Mantel, even when the virtues of this court are revealed to be more superficial than intrinsic.

This emerges also from Tyolet. The court in this lai is also presided over by King Arthur, here presented unequivocally as an admirable figure, and wholly lives up to its lofty reputation, that is first indicated by Tyolet's mother, in urging her son to go to it (Tyolet 270-74). The quality of this court, as revealed through narrative by its treatment of Tyolet, is not wholly dependent upon the character of the King himself. Gauvain, always a key figure in the Arthurian court as portrayed in contemporary literature, also distinguishes himself. It is he who is most concerned with defending Tyolet's rights, and saves the young knight's life when he has been left to die by the wicked knight. He thereby manifests the spirit of justice and of solidarity that pervades the court as a

whole. As it is this image of the good court as a homogeneous entity that emerges in the episode of Tyolet's return after his adventure, when he is greeted by all the members of the court: -

Gauvains le baise, e Uriain,  
Keu, e Evain, le filz Morgain,  
e Lodoier l'ala besier  
e tuit li autre chevalier.

Tyolet 629-32.

The court in Tyolet is, thus, presented as an ideal, upholding the highest standards of knighthood and courtly relationships.

In Melion also, Arthur's court appears as a suitable setting for the knightly hero to enjoy social fulfilment. We have seen already the extent to which Arthur himself is revealed to be exemplary as a king in his treatment towards Melion. Melion, as werewolf and restored to human form, is not, however, shown only in his relationship with the King, but in a wider social context with the knights of Arthur's court. His integration into this society is almost as dependent upon their attitude in general as it is upon that of the King. As in Tyolet, it is the positive sense of goodwill and fellowship that characterises their treatment of the newcomer, as demonstrated by the general joy expressed at his recovering his human form: -

Qant le virent home formé,  
Molt ont grant joie demené.

Melion 553-54.

The court of the King of Brittany is presented in very similar terms in Bisclavret. There too Bisclavret, still in the form of a wolf, is welcomed and cared for not only by the King himself, but also by the other knights (Bisclavret 160-84).

Tuz jurs entre les chevaliers  
E pres del rei s'alout cuchier.

Bisclavret 176-77.

We see clearly the extent to which Bisclavret in his progress towards reintegration into this knightly society is dependent upon

the goodness of the court.

What is particularly significant about the royal court as it appears in both Melion and Bisclavret is the contrast it presents with the forest in which the two heroes having been forced to live as wild animals. The comforts of civilisation and the participation in human society, however limited, are much appreciated by the werewolves as being their natural environment. The return to this social context is the first, necessary step towards the complete social fulfilment to which both aspire. It is only through their contact with the King and the court that either will be restored to human form and will be able to resume his rightful role in this society as a knight and vassal. We see, then, in both *lais* how important a role a suitable social context can play in enabling an individual to achieve the degree of social fulfilment that is rightfully his.

In very different circumstances, this emerges also from Lanval. Here again the social setting is the court of King Arthur, where Lanval's position is determined not only by his relationship with the King, his lord, but also by his more general relations with the knights of the court. In this case, these knights are not portrayed unequivocally in a positive light, but after their initial indifference towards Lanval, they do come to appreciate him for his qualities, and to express friendship towards him. Thus they are keen to include him in their midsummer festivities, although they do at first forget him. This is stressed, however, as being forgetfulness and they are energetic in manifesting their goodwill towards him (Lanval 219-52): -

A tant sunt ariere turné;

A sun ostel revunt ariere,  
Lanval ameinent par preiere.

Lanval 234-36.

Again this goodwill, this sense of responsibility for the welfare of a fellow knight, is demonstrated by the court towards Lanval at the time of his trial. Gauvain and the other knights assume liability for the bail; they visit him frequently in his lodgings and are fearful for the state of his sanity (Lanval 397-406). In all of this they manifest their support for him in his plight, and they are keen for him to be acquitted, as is particularly indicated by their joy when Lanval's mistress rides into court to provide evidence of his innocence (Lanval 503-610).

Thus, by the end of the lai, the court has established itself as a positive and socially integrating force in its relations with Lanval. If he had chosen to stay at Arthur's court at this stage it is evident that he would have had every chance of enjoying complete social fulfilment.

Arthur's court might not always appear as exemplary in this lai, but it does, nonetheless provide the social framework in which Lanval can function as a social being and it retains its basic social significance as a pocket of civilisation, with beyond it the anti-social heathland into which Lanval dispiritedly rides at the beginning of the lai (Lanval 41-52).

Images of the royal court, as the centre of chivalric society and the only suitable setting in which the hero of a lai can achieve social fulfilment, are to be found also in Graelent, Guingamor and Desiré. In all three it appears as a pocket of civilisation in contrast to the wilderness of the forest. For Graelent, Guingamor

and Desiré, as active knights, it provides the natural social environment in which they live and prove themselves at the beginning of the lai and which provides the context for their various social relationships.

In Guingamor, the social context to which the young hero belongs is not restricted to the court itself. Here we see the individual participating in a wider sense in social relationships, which enhance the degree of fulfilment that he clearly enjoys while living at his uncle's court. The extent to which Guingamor is integrated into society in this wider sense is indicated by the reaction of the townspeople as well as the members of the court and the King himself to Guingamor's undertaking the hunt of the white boar. As a gesture of their love for him, they accompany him to the edge of the forest when he starts out on the hunt (Guingamor 248-94): -

cil de la vile, li borjois  
et li vilain et li cortois  
le convoierent autresi  
o grant dolor et o grant cri;  
et nes les dames i aloient,  
merveilleus duel por lui faisoient.

Guingamor 263-68.

In no other lai do we find a character receiving such wholehearted and unanimous support from the totality of society in all its ranks. The solidarity that these people manifest, standing on the edge of the forest until they can no longer even hear the sound of Guingamor's horn (Guingamor 303-12), demonstrates the extent to which this society actively fulfils its role as a scaffolding to the individual. Guingamor, perhaps more than any other hero in the lais appears as an integral part of the society to which he belongs.

In Guingamor, thus, we find what is ideally the relationship that should exist between the individual and society. It is when there

is such reciprocity that the individual can most completely achieve social fulfilment. For this, the individual has to meet all the demands that society might make upon him, upholding the standards of social behaviour through the fulfilment of his ascribed social roles. But it is equally necessary that society should uphold the same standards of conduct, the same values, appreciating thereby the qualities manifested by the individual in his participation in that society. The nexus of society, here in Guingamor as in the other lais, might be the royal court, but society, as a physical reality and as a concept, extends beyond this to involve all human relationships as a network of support for the individual. It is when there is this equilibrium of interaction between the individual and society, that social fulfilment can be achieved, to the benefit of both the individual and society<sup>32</sup>.

There are, however, cases in the lais when such social fulfilment is in fact achieved only through the intervention of an external force: the supernatural<sup>33</sup>.

This is the case in Lanval. At the beginning of the lai, Lanval, despite his personal qualities and his desire to be integrated into the Arthurian court, is prevented from being wholly fulfilled within this society. It is as a result of his encounter with the fairy, who provides him with gifts, that he is enabled to return to fulfilling a more active social role in courtly society. It is also as a result of the intervention of the fairy in his trial, that Lanval is acquitted by the King and so has a greater chance of achieving complete social fulfilment through his relationship with Arthur and the court than at any previous time. Thus, we see the way in which the supernatural, in the form of a being from the Other



World, can act directly as a positive, socially integrating force on the life of the individual.

The fairy mistress in Graelent acts in a similar way to provide Graelent with greater opportunities of fulfilment within the royal court, giving him gifts to support him in the costly lifestyle of an active knight (Graelent 329-96), and coming to his trial to prove his innocence publicly to the court (Graelent 559-638).

It is a similar role that the fairy in Guingamor portends to play in the life of the young knight. She assures him that she will provide him with the means to return to the Real World and to the court of his uncle (Guingamor 464-74). As we have seen, although she does enable Guingamor to return to the Real World, it is not a return to chivalric society and social fulfilment.

In Tydorel the intervention of the supernatural into the lives of mortals takes the form of the knight from the Other World who comes to Tydorel's mother and impregnates her. Through conceiving and giving birth to Tydorel she is able to provide her husband with a longed for heir, thereby fulfilling one of the essential social functions of marriage (Tydorel 40-178).

It is also a knight from the Other World who, by very different means, helps Tyolet towards achieving fulfilment in his rightful social role. It is through his encounter with the stag/knight that Tyolet first learns of the existence of knights and is inspired to become one himself. It is, thus, this encounter that is his fateful first step towards achieving fulfilment as an active Arthurian knight.

In all of these cases, there is a very clear contrast between the passivity of the mortals involved and the deliberateness with which beings from the Other World intervene in their lives. In every case the Other World being stresses the premeditation involved in his/her coming.

In Lanval, the fairy says to the young knight at the time of their first meeting: -

'Pur vus vinc jeo fors de ma tere:  
De luinz vus sui venue quere!'

Lanval 111-12.

In Graelent, it is apparently by chance that Graelent comes upon the fairy while she is bathing; but she then makes it clear that, in fact, she was the one who took the initiative in coming to him: -

'por vous ving jou a la fontaine,'

Graelent 315.

In Guingamor also, the fairy takes the initiative, in urging Guingamor to go with her to her palace if he wants to have a chance of returning to his own country (Guingamor 444-74).

Equally assertive is the knight from the Other World who comes to the Queen in Tydorel: -

'Dame, fet il, ci sui venuz  
por vos que molt aim e desir.'

Tydorel 58-59.

He indicates the reasons for his coming, which are of social significance as well as being a search for love; her tells the Queen of the birth of her son who will become King of Brittany and of her daughter who will found a powerful lineage (Tydorel 111-48).

In a similarly authoritative tone, the stag/knight in Tyolet tells the young man exactly what to do in order to become a knight (Tyolet 223-46).

Thus in each case it is very patently the being from the Other World who fully takes the initiative in intervening in the life of a particular, chosen mortal in order to provide him/her with the wherewithal for social fulfilment. In most of the cases (Lanval, Graelent, Guingamor, Tydorel), the specific motive for coming is love and to bring personal fulfilment to the mortal. The aspect of fulfilment in social terms derived from these encounters is nonetheless an important and direct consequence. The motive of these beings from the Other World in making contact with mortals is most certainly not to lure them away from the Real World.

In Lanval, the fairy, having offered her love to Lanval, then tells him most firmly to return to Arthur's court: -

'Amis, fet ele, levez sus!  
Vus n'i poëz demurer plus:  
Alez vus en! Jeo remeindrai.'

Lanval 159-61.

When, at the end of the lai, she leaves Arthur's court, having proven Lanval's innocence to the King, she gives Lanval no encouragement to follow her, during the whole trial she says not a word to him and then she rides off.

The fairy in Graelent behaves in an identical way in the equivalent episodes. She also is most insistent that Graelent return to his own society at the end of their first encounter, saying to him: -

'Alés vous ent, none est sonee,  
Graelent 326.

And at the end of the lai, she not only does not encourage him to leave the Real World, but actively discourages him from doing so. She crosses the perilous river, which is the barrier between the two worlds and tells him to stay in the Real World (Graelent 643-99).

She says to him: -

'Fui, Graelent, n'i entre pas.'  
Graelent 663.

It is only when it seems certain that he will drown and her maidens plead desperately with him to save his life that she relents (Graelent 683-708).

In Tydorel also, the knight who comes from the Other World to be the lover of Tydorel's mother, makes it very clear that she will stay in the Real World, even after his departure from it. He says to her at the time of their first encounter: -

'je m'en irai, vos remaindrez;'  
Tydorel 67.

These supernatural beings all act, thus, as a very positive and dynamic force in the lives of the chosen mortals, providing them with the means for a degree of social fulfilment which is necessary to them, but which has previously been lacking.

We see in these cases how the same means can lead to fulfilment both in love and in society. In Deus Amanz it is the strength giving potion and is intended to fulfil a similar function in enabling the young couple to marry - a marriage that would be both a love match and socially desirable. It is true that Marie most specifically situates the elixir in the Real World of medical science, and the girl tells her friend that it is made by her aunt who lives in the famous medical town of Salerno: -

'En Salerne ai une parente,  
Riche femme, mut ad grant rente.  
Plus de trente anz i ad esté;  
L'art de phisike ad tant usé  
Que mut est saive de mescines.  
Tant cunuist herbes e racines,'

Deuz Amanz 103-08.

This medicine is, nonetheless, surely derived from a tradition of magical potions that includes the celebrated love elixir in

Tristan<sup>34</sup>. It is for this reason that it merits a mention in this context.

There are two other lais in which mortals are able to achieve a greater degree of fulfilment within society as a direct result of contact with the supernatural, Espine and Tyolet. What distinguishes these examples from those in the other lais already considered is that fact that in both it is the mortal who takes the initiative towards achieving his own social fulfilment. In both lais the manifestation of the supernatural world serves as a force against which the hero matches himself in order to prove his prowess and so enhance his reputation in the chivalric society of the Real World.

In the Lai de l'Espine, the Other World manifests itself in the form of the three knights who are defeated by the hero at the 'Gué de l'Espine'. In Tyolet it is in the form of the stag with the white hoof, which Tyolet succeeds in cutting off. In both cases the hero is able to return to the royal court from whence he has come, publicly victorious and, accordingly, celebrated by society<sup>35</sup>.

Although we have seen that the Other World appears to a large extent in opposition to the Real World, it is obvious that contact with the Other World can, nonetheless, serve a very positive role in affecting the individual's relations with courtly and chivalric society in the Real World, enabling the individual to enjoy a greater degree of social fulfilment than might otherwise have been possible. Often the supernatural comes into play as a socially integrating force to serve as a compensation to the individual for a form of social fulfilment that has been lacking but that is deserved

by him/her. In these cases, the supernatural provides the extra weight necessary to ensure the correct balance in the relationship between the individual and society.

What emerges from this consideration of the different aspects of social fulfilment is that, ultimately, it is a state achievable to a complete degree only when there is a convergence of circumstances. There is an extent to which the individual is responsible for his own fate in social terms. It is necessary for him to recognise what are his rights and duties in society, and to observe these. Although society is presented in the *lais* in its widest sense, as being in contrast to the Other World and to the wilderness that surrounds the pockets of civilisation, the true focus is on the social milieu of the nobility. It is the values and manners of this social class that define the standards of social behaviour that are to be upheld by the individual in his active participation in society as a knight and as a lord and vassal. The fulfilment of these socially defined roles do not, however, necessarily ensure the individual of enjoying complete social fulfilment.

For such total fulfilment in social terms reciprocity is necessary; it is this that is the basis of all social intercourse. In all social relationships there must, of necessity, be a balance of respect, fidelity, support and trust. On the basis of these factors social relationships can function to the benefit of all concerned. The position of the individual in society is, thus, dependent not only upon his own efforts, but also on his existence within and participation in a framework of society that is compatible with his social status, that respects the same standards of conduct that he does, and that provides him with the means to develop fully according

to his capabilities. In such circumstances an individual can be defined as enjoying complete social fulfilment; in other, less ideal, conditions, we see that it is possible for him/her to achieve a partial fulfilment by such terms, often as an intermediary stage towards absolute fulfilment.

Observance of duty, commitment to the upholding of social values and to active participation in society are, thus, essential; so too is a degree of affection. Social relationships as depicted in the *lais* ideally include a dimension of personal fulfilment, as will be seen at greater length in Chapter IV.

The degree of focus to be found on the fulfilment by the individual of his various roles in society varies from *lai* to *lai*; in some the notion of social fulfilment plays a major part, in others a minor, but it is absent from none, and in all there is some indication of the social context in which the story takes place. This social context is invariably a reflection, albeit distorted or idealised, of the contemporary social reality experienced by the authors of the *lais* and by their intended noble audience. The *lais* present images of arranged marriages, vassallic service, seigniorial responsibilities, tournaments and monastic life that would be recognisable to them, despite the inclusion of references to a world of supernatural beings and happenings.

Chapter Two: Footnotes

- 1 (p.67) Dafydd Evans: 'Wishfulfilment: The Social Function and Classification of Old French Romances'.

Marriage was the centre of all medieval social institutions, as has been acknowledged by social historians such as Georges Duby. Marriage for the feudal aristocracy was principally concerned with inheritance, formalized by a pact between two houses. p.130

- 2 (p.70) Georges Duby: The Chivalrous Society.

In order to feel noble, and therefore to be noble, a man had to be able to refer to a genealogy. p.147

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries there was, indeed, a trend in genealogical literature. p.130.

Denise McClelland: Le Vocabulaire des Lais de Marie de France.

A la notion de naissance (ch.I), il faut invariablement associer celle de parage. Les parents, alliés dans la procréation pour des raisons politiques prolongent la race. Les héros des Lais sont donc les représentants d'un cercle social très exclusif. p.147.

Glyn S. Burgess: 'Social Status in the Lais of Marie de France'

At birth a boy bears his father's rank, to which he is a potential heir. He shares his father's prestige and ideally he inherits his father's values and virtues. Any personal characteristics he possesses are latent and must be realised through military activity consequent upon knighthood. p.72

- 3 (p.71) J.C. Payen: Littérature française vol I: Le moyen Âge: Des origines à 1300.

La société, telle qu'elle existe, est voulue par Dieu et constitue une réalité nouvelle: s'en exclure est aller contre l'ordre des choses. Le devoir fondamental de l'individu est donc de participer à cette société en remplissant son devoir d'état. p.93

- 4 (p.74) Ernest Hoepffner: 'La Géographie et l'histoire dans les Lais de Marie de France'.

Hoepffner wonders if Marie was aware of the combat between Isembart and his father in Gormont et Isembart, although noting that Gormont et Isembart was not widely known at the time. p8.

- 5 (p.80) Glyn S. Burgess: 'Chivalry and Prowess in the Lais of Marie de France'.  
see pp.137-40.

- 6 (p.80) Jean Flori: 'La notion de Chevalerie dans les Chansons de Geste du XIIe siècle: Étude historique de vocabulaire'.



L'adoubement s'accompagne presque toujours de don de chevaux et d'armes, très souvent de terres. Ces dons appellent au retour un service; celui de l'aide, d'assistance au seigneur. p.239

Burgess: 'Social Status in the Lais of Marie de France'.  
see p.72.

7. (p.83) P.E. Bennett: 'Havelok and Rainoart'.
8. (p.83) Burgess: 'Chivalry and Prowess in the Lais of Marie de France'.

Tournaments were a way of building and maintaining a reputation and displaying virtues such as generosity.  
p.137

see pp.137-38.

Colin Morris: The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200.

The picture is complicated, however, by the appearance within the aristocracy of two groups with special interests. One of these is that of the young men, the juvenes, who spent some years in absence from their fathers' estates. It is not clear how far this group is a new social phenomenon, or whether it had always existed, but without having, as far as we know, the same cultural impact. It is reasonable to think that the increasing adoption of primogeniture helped to bring such groups into existence, for it made it urgently necessary for younger brothers to find a wife and landed estates, as they could not hope for much from their father's inheritance. Moreover the increasingly good political order in many parts of Europe made it less necessary to have sons in residence to defend the family estates, and obliged those who wanted adventure to seek it elsewhere, in tournaments, on crusade, or in areas where warfare was endemic. p.43

Michel Parisse: 'Le Tournoi en France des origines à la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle'.  
see pp.200-01.

Georges Duby: 'Dans la France du Nord-Ouest au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle: les Jeunes dans la société aristocratique'.

- 9 (p.85) Marcelle Thiébaux: The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature.  
see p.19. The hunt as a noble pursuit, indicative of knightliness.

The stag chase, which was considered in the Middle Ages to be the 'noblest' sport. Indeed, the stag, together with the 'noble' boar, is the quarry most often hunted in medieval epics and romances. p.19

- 10 (p.88) F.L. Ganshof: Feudalism.  
see Chapter III.

- 11 (p.89) Jacques De Caluwé: 'La Conception de l'amour dans le lai d'Eliduc de Marie de France'.

La loyauté féodale l'emporte immédiatement dans le coeur du chevalier. p.63

- 12 (p.90) Paula Clifford: Marie de France: Lais.

This theme of the temptress rebuffed, which goes back to the Old Testament story of Potiphar's wife, is a familiar one in medieval literature. p.58

- 13 (p.94) Jill M. Pepper: Courtly Conventions, 1150-1250, as Shown in the Tristan Legends, in the Writings of Marie de France and in the Arthurian Legends.  
see Chapter I Feudal Society: The King and Queen.

The suzerain's responsibility for protecting his vassals included the dispensation of justice. It was the lord's duty to preside over official courts, to hear and sift the evidence of conflicting parties and, with the aid of his barons, to pass judgment. p.7

Burgess: 'Social Status in the Lais of Marie de France'.

Marie's view of the ideal king is probably close to the patriarchal conception of John of Salisbury, who stresses the association between rex and recte and insists that a king should pay heed to the welfare of others rather than his own, dispensing justice and looking to the safety of his subjects. p.70

- 14 (p.98) Pepper: Courtly Conventions, 1150-1250.  
see pp.35-42.

Despite his wrath, Arthur is anxious to preserve his reputation for honourable behaviour and he summons all the barons of his household to give him good advice. p.37

- 15 (p.99) E.A. Francis: 'The Trial in Lanval'.

Rolf Nagel: 'A Propos de Fresne (v261-272)'.

Marie clearly had accurate knowledge of contemporary social institutions, as evidenced by the trial in Lanval. p.455

W.T.H. Jackson: 'The Arthuricity of Marie de France'.

Arthur's legal position is correct. His honour has been impugned through the alleged insults to his queen. p.13

Jackson nonetheless refers to the trial itself as: -

the virtual parody of a trial. p.13

- 16 (p.99) Edgard Sienart: Les Lais de Marie de France: du conte merveilleux à la nouvelle psychologique.

Pendant que la justice arthurienne déroule lourdement sa

procédure rigide et immuable, la justice du monde amoureux fait preuve de souplesse et de générosité en brisant le carcan des formules magiques contraignantes. p.106

Jacques Ribard: 'Le Lai de Lanval: essai d'interprétation polysémique'.

Jacques Ribard is very critical of the Arthurian court and its handling of the trial of Lanval: -

C'est tout un univers scélératé dont les usages féodaux et juridiques vont se trouver comme ridiculisés. p.531

- 17 (p.107) Payen: Le moyen âge: Des origines à 1300.

La féodalité constitue un monde équilibré de relations humaines, une pyramide de pouvoirs fondés sur un rapport personnel entre seigneurs, vassaux et vavasseurs (vassaux de vassaux). Elle repose sur un engagement d'homme à homme, garanti par serment réciproque. Le seigneur doit à son vassal aide en cas de péril; le vassal s'engage à participer au besoin à l'ost de son seigneur. pp.24-25

Pepper: Courtly Conventions, 1150-1250.  
see pp.77-82; 91-92.

The relationship between lord and vassal was indeed one of mutual help, respect and loyalty. The overlord could demand absolute loyalty and implicit obedience to his slightest wish, but in return he had to deal honestly with his vassals. p.77

The feudal relationship was one of mutual authority and responsibility, and if one violated principles held by the other then the contract could be annulled. p.82

Ganshof: Feudalism.  
see p.75.

- 18 (p.108) Glyn S. Burgess: Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire pré-courtois.

Il faut tenir compte également du fait que le mariage, dans le monde féodal, était presque uniquement de convenance. L'amour n'y jouait pas un grand rôle: avant tout, la femme devait assurer la postérité d'un lignage, donner la vie à des héritiers. p.18

Jean Frappier: 'Vues sur les conceptions courtoises dans les littératures d'oc et d'oïl au XIIe siècle'.

Les mariages princiers et seigneuriaux se contractaient ordinairement pour des raisons d'intérêt plus que de sentiment. De leur côté les théologiens n'assignaient pas d'autre but au mariage que la procréation: si certains d'entre eux considéraient comme innocent le plaisir sexuel dans l'acte conjugal, tous condamnent l'amour-passion entre époux. p.144

L'idéal courtois ambitionne au contraire d'assurer dans le mariage tous les droits ou privilèges de l'amour. p.144

Jean Leclercq: Le Mariage vu par les moines au XIIe siècle.  
see pp.25-26.

Georges Duby: Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth-Century France.

Georges Duby: Le Chevalier la femme et le prêtre: Le mariage dans la France féodale.

Angela M. Lucas: Women in the Middle Ages: Religion, Marriage and Letters.

see Chapter VI Marriage in the Early Middle Ages; Chapter VII The Feudal Wife.

- 19 (p.108) Ganshof: Feudalism.  
see Chapter III.

Pepper: Courtly Conventions, 1150-1250.  
see p.84.

Georges Duby: 'Une enquête à poursuivre: La noblesse dans la France médiévale'.  
see pp.20-21 on the stability of the noble families and their inheritance.

Duby: 'Dans la France du Nord-Ouest au XIIe siècle: Les Jeunes dans la société aristocratique'.  
see pp.840-46. The effects of primogeniture.

Marcel David: 'Le Mariage dans la société féodale' (Note Critique sur Le Chevalier, la femme et le prêtre par Georges Duby).  
see p.1053.

Morris: The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200.  
see pp.40-41.

20. (p.108) Burgess: 'Chivalry and Prowess in the Lais of Marie de France'.

Gurun is in fact the only 'chevalier' whose conflict is with his social inferiors. Their behaviour gives us a glimpse of the latent power of the small-time landed knight. p.136

Pepper: Courtly Conventions, 1150-1250.

So important was it to the vassals that their land should be protected that they could advise their lord to marry in order to produce an heir and to provide future protection. p.85

- 21 (p.110) Jean Subrenat: 'L'Aveu du secret d'amour dans Le Lai de Désiré'.

La cérémonie de mariage fait entrer le couple en tant que tel dans la norme sociale. p.378

- 22 (p.110) M.B. Ogle: 'The Orchard Scene in "Tydorel" and "Sir Gowther"'.  
M.B. Ogle relates the orchard episode which leads to the conception of Tydorel to a similar episode in Sir Gowther, finding the source for both in an apocryphal version of the Gospels, such as the pseudo-Matthew. pp.42-42

- 23 (p.111) Lucas: Women in the Middle Ages.

Given such a social arrangement, it is easy to see how a girl, especially of the baronial or knightly class, might be regarded as more or less useless. She could not serve as an overlord in war, and this had an unhappy effect on feudal society's approach to marriage. In order to be protected, it was necessary for a woman to be attached to someone who could render military service to an overlord, and who could manage a large estate or matrimony. Thus when a girl was deemed old enough, or if her father were dead, she had to marry, generally with little choice in the matter of a husband. A woman was often merely an appendage to a fief and it was difficult to separate a woman from lands. pp.84-85

Duby: The Chivalrous Society.  
see p.141.

Duby: Medieval Marriage.  
see p.6.

- 24 (p.111) D.D.R. Owen: Noble Lovers.

Her betrothal and marriage were commonly arranged to serve dynastic or similarly practical ends, and she was frequently taken to wife while still little more than a child. Love had no necessary part in these unions, the propagation of many, preferably male, heirs being their chief function. p.10

- 25 (p.115) Rosemarie Jones: The Theme of Love in the Romans d'Antiquité.  
see pp.11-12.

- 26 (p.119) R.W. Southern: Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages.  
see pp.228-29; 309.

Further, in addition to the need for eternal life, the economy of a great family required a monastic outlet for its members. At no time in the Middle Ages, and least of all in the early centuries, were the resources of society expanding fast enough to provide honourable positions in secular life for all the children of noble families. p.228

- 27 (p.119) Lucas: Women in the Middle Ages.  
see pp.47-56; 85.

- 28 (p.119) Duby: Medieval Marriage.  
see Chapter II. An Analysis of the views of different

churchmen on divorce, annulment of marriage and remarriage in the twelfth century.

- 29 (p.121) Leo Spitzer: 'Marie de France: Dichterin von Problem-Märchen'.  
see p.54.

R.N. Illingworth: 'La Chronologie des Lais de Marie de France'.

Florence McCulloch: 'Length, Recitation and Meaning in the Lais of Marie de France'.  
see pp.265-66.

Certainly no other lai ends in a manner in any way resembling this. It is no longer a question of earthly justice (or injustice or fate) triumphing, or earthly lovers loving, but of three individuals living in a harmony that surpasses all others. In her twelve lais Marie has led her audience, by paired examples of the type of life or love to be avoided or to be imitated, to a summit in the final lai, a scene of perfect charity in the service and love of God. p.266

- 30 (p.125) Angus J. Kennedy: 'The Hermit's Role in French Arthurian Romance (c1170-1530)'.  
31 (p.131) Prudence Mary O'Hara Tobin: 'L'Elément breton et les lais anonymes'.

Les Lais de Marie de France sont un produit de la société courtoise de son époque. p.277

Roger Dubuis: Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles et la tradition de de la nouvelle en France au moyen âge.

Le paysage n'y a rien d'irréel: lande, forêt, châteaux, c'est celui-là même dans lequel vivent les lecteurs. p.337

Payen: Le moyen âge: Des origines à 1300.  
see II 1 L'Homme devant la nature.

- 32 (p.139) Burgess: 'Chivalry and Prowess in the Lais of Marie de France'.

Marie offers us in the Lais a discussion of the behaviour and problems of the later twelfth-century knight set against a background of his superiors in rank and power, who have the capacity to protect or destroy him. p.130

This applies equally to the other lais.

- 33 (p.139) Adrienne Gouraige: Le Merveilleux dans les Lais de Marie de France.

Adrienne Gouraige draws attention to how often the intervention of the supernatural is at the same time the introduction of love into the life of the individual. p.132

L'importance du rôle de l'amour tend à réduire et à transformer de plus en plus la formation du merveilleux dans les lais. Cependant il ne disparaît pas tout à fait. p.132

Philippe Ménard: Les Lais de Marie de France.

Ménard aligns Marie with contemporary writers in her rationalisation of the supernatural, and although his conclusions might be rather wide as a generalisation they are to a fair degree justified.

On pourrait donc soutenir que le recours au merveilleux est principalement une facilité romanesque, une utilité pour faire avancer l'action dans le sens souhaité puisque aucun des éléments merveilleux n'est gratuit. Chaque fois que les merveilles apparaissent c'est pour donner une inflexion nouvelle au récit. p.184

Le merveilleux est donc lié à une difficulté de l'intrigue, à un obstacle qu'il permet de vaincre. p.185

- 34 (p.144) Oliver M. Johnston: 'Sources of the Lay of the Two Lovers'.  
see p.38 Magic potions with the power of increasing human strength are to be found in numerous tales from different countries.

- 35 (p.144) Lucien Foulet: 'Marie de France et les lais bretons'.

Foulet is surely too harsh in his criticisms of the Lai de l'Espine for its debt to Marie and lack of originality: -

Le lai d'Espine est tout entier l'oeuvre d'un plagiaire médiocre et inintelligent. p.36

CHAPTER THREE: FORMS OF SOCIAL NON-FULFILMENT: CAUSES AND EFFECTS

Having defined the forms of social fulfilment that appear in the *lais*, it is now possible to define the forms of social non-fulfilment in the same terms. These can be catalogued accordingly: non-human form; loss of family identity; non-fulfilment of knightly role; non-fulfilment of vassalic role; of seigniorial role; collapsed lord-vassal relationship; non-fulfilment in marriage; existence in the Other World; exile from own country; isolation from society. The non-fulfilment of an individual in society, just as his/her social fulfilment, is determined not only by his/her own behaviour but also by that of these others towards him/her and by the impact of external forces. We have already seen the extent to which reciprocity is essential to a balance in social relationships. It is interesting to note how far the repercussions of the failure in social terms of one individual can extend in affecting the position in society of others. Once the essential balance in the relationship between an individual and society has been tipped, the consequence is very often a chain reaction, with one form of social non-fulfilment, as defined above, leading to one or more others. Also the causes behind the tipping of the balance in this way will often be multiple.

Because of the complexity of these cause and effect type relationships between the various forms of social non-fulfilment, there is only a limited value in considering each of the forms in isolation. Far more significant is a consideration of exactly how these relationships function as chain reactions.



1. Non Human Form

Bisclavret and Melion are the only two lais in which mortals suffer a loss of their human form. There are, however, a number of other characters in the lais who are also to be considered here; as beings from the Other World, they remain non-human in essence even if adopting human appearance and as such can never be fully integrated into the society of mortals in the Real World.

Bisclavret's metamorphosis from this human form into that of a wolf is primarily as a result of a tendency apparently innate within him. The reasons for this tendency are never explained within the lai; Marie simply presents it as a fact of Bisclavret's identity at the beginning of the lai. At this stage, he becomes a wolf for three days of the week. As such he has to isolate himself from society and his wife, going off alone into the forest. During those periods he can fulfil none of the roles that society would demand and expect of him, as knight and vassal, lord and husband. The metamorphosis is brought about by Bisclavret's removing his clothes when in the forest. The forest, we have already seen, stands in contrast to society and civilisation as a domain of mystery and sometimes of danger. Thus at the time of his transformation Bisclavret has physically isolated himself from what is his natural and desirable social milieu. The removal of his clothes also has a symbolic as well as material significance, as a gesture of abandonment of socialising forces. The wearing of clothes is, after all one of the essential distinctions between civilised man and wild beast<sup>1</sup>. The importance of Bisclavret's clothes is stressed as they are the vital key to his transformation between human and bestial form, without them it is impossible for him to return to human form.

The fact of Bisclavret's metamorphosing into a wolf, as he does at the beginning of the lai, does not in itself wholly isolate him from society. Only on the days of his actually being a wolf does he suffer in this way; on the other days of the week he is able to participate in society as fully as any other knightly hero of the lais. His life exists as a balance, albeit an uneasy one.

What forces Bisclavret out of this balance and into extreme social isolation is his wife's repudiation of him. While Marie might have some sympathy for the wife's reaction of horror on discovering the reason behind Bisclavret's weekly absences, the wife appears nonetheless as an antipathetic figure for her failure to observe her fundamental duty of faithfulness as a wife. It is as a result of her betrayal that Bisclavret is precipitated into a state of isolation as a werewolf that is potentially permanent. Her failure in terms of marital obligations is total, with her offering her love and her hand in a bigamous marriage to a knight in return for his help in disposing of her rightful husband. Marie makes clear the responsibility of the wife for Bisclavret's unmerited plight:-

Issi fu Bisclavret trahiz  
E par sa femme maubailiz.

Bisclavret 125-26.

The period of Bisclavret's most extreme social isolation lasts a year, from the point when his wife's lover takes away his clothes. During this time he lives alone, as a wild animal in the forest, with no contact with human society in any form. Indeed his own people believe him to be dead (Bisclavret 127-32). We have already noted, however, that even at this time, Bisclavret retains his human character. Thus his loss of human form is only in terms of appearance, not in essence. This detail, which ensures that Bisclavret always retains the reader's sympathy, is stressed within

the lai<sup>2</sup>. His essential humanity of character is in contrast to the bestial ferocity of werewolves in general as described by Marie in her introduction to the story:-

Hume plusur garval devindrent  
E es boscages meisun tindrent.  
Garvalf, ceo est beste salvage;  
Tant cum il est en cele rage,  
Hummes devure, grant mal fait,  
Es granz forez converse e vait.

Bisclavret 7-12.

Bisclavret does indeed live in the depths of the forest like any other wolf, but there is no suggestion whatever that he devours men or in any other way adopts the savagery of their lifestyle. It is the fact that Bisclavret retains his inner human nature that allows Bisclavret to move away from this state of extreme isolation from civilised society, which affects him not only physically but in every way possible (Bisclavret 145-69).

However, even when he is taken to the court by the King, this is social re-integration only at a physical level. No more than when he lived in the forest can he participate actively in this chivalric society, to which he can contribute nothing so long as he is not restored to human form. As a wolf, even a wolf endowed with human sensibility, he remains socially unfulfilled, unable to assume the rights and responsibilities of his human existence as a knight and vassal of the King.

Melion also is unable to achieve absolute social fulfilment at any point during his existence as a wolf. There are, nonetheless, differences as well as similarities in the experiences of these two werewolf/knights. Like Bisclavret, Melion's transformation from human to wolf is due in part to a trait within him and in part to the malicious intervention of his wife. In Melion's case, there is

no suggestion that such transformations are a regular part of his normal existence, rather it would seem that it is exceptional. The reason for his metamorphosis in the story is for him to be enabled to capture a stag. It is, therefore, prompted by the concern of a good husband, keen to provide his wife with every happiness, a gesture of love, which is turned ironically against him by the lack of reciprocal love in his wife.

As in Bisclavret, the metamorphosis takes place in the seclusion of the forest, and, as in Bisclavret, clothing plays an important contributory role. Melion himself stresses the importance of his clothes as the means of him to be restored to human form, indicating that his period not in human form is like a death to him, which indeed it is as it prevents him from leading any normal human life in society (Melion 163-72). It is when he removes his clothes that he transforms into a wolf: -

grant le vit nu e despoillié.  
Lors devint leu grant e corsus,  
Melion 180-81.

We note the emphasis on his nudity: naked man, stripped of the trappings of civilisation. Yet, even more than in Bisclavret, the true blame for Melion's suffering, the consequences of his transformation lies with his wife. Here she actively participates in the actual transformation which can only take place when Melion is touched on the forehead by a ring, which she does. It is also specifically to his wife that Melion entrusts his clothes, clearly explaining to her the extent of this responsibility and the consequences for him if they are not returned to him: -

'Por Deu vos pri, ci m'atendés  
e ma despoille me gardés.  
Je vos lais ma vie e ma mort;  
il n'i auroit nul reconfort  
se de l'autre touciés n'estoie;

jamais nul jor hom ne seroie!

Melion 167-72.

If his wife had done as he asks, Melion would have stayed as a wolf only for the time of capturing the stag. It is unequivocally his wife's betrayal, in abandoning him and returning to Ireland, that forces him into an existence of extreme social isolation as a werewolf, a situation that causes him much sorrow: -

Molt fu dolans, ne set que face,  
qant il ne le troeve en la place.

Melion 215-16.

This experience is more extreme even than that of Bisclavret. As a wolf, Melion leaves his own country and crosses the sea to Ireland. There he lives completely as a wild animal, in forests and mountains; estranged from human society, he fully espouses the existence of a wolf. He becomes the leader of the pack of wolves: -

Tant a alé par la forest,  
par montaignes e par dessert,  
que a .X. leus s'acompaigna;

Melion 267-69.

With them he attacks human beings, and ravages the lands they have cultivated, kills their livestock: -

tot le païs ont degasté,  
homes e femes ocioient,  
tote la terre destruioient.

Melion 276-78.

Thus as a wolf, Melion is not only prevented by circumstances from participating in a positive way in society, but actively becomes a destructive force seeking to destabilize society. This represents a total reversal of his initial situation as a well loved knight and vassal in the Arthurian court.

The degree of social reintegration that Melion is able to achieve while still a wolf, even after he has been welcomed into Arthur's company, is, like that of Bisclvret, limited. His bestial

appearance prevents him from contributing to that society.

Thus in Bisclavret and Melion we find the same cause and effect pattern relating different forms of social non-fulfilment.

- personal trait	non-human form	→	- physical isolation from society
- failure of wife	(werewolf)	→	- non-fulfilment as knight
to fulfil			- non-fulfilment in feudal
marital role			relationships

In Bisclavret, there is an added detail that reinforces the central theme. The wives of both men are considered responsible for the loss of social fulfilment as suffered by them, and both are punished. In Bisclavret, Bisclavret metes out his own punishment, ripping off his wife's nose (Bisclavret 235). This is a disfigurement that makes her appearance sub-human, a just retribution for having forced Bisclavret to a bestial existence, as Marie makes clear<sup>3</sup>: -

Oiez cum il est bien vengiez:

Bisclavret 234.

This is consistent with notions of eye for eye justice that are prevalent throughout the *lais*, as, also, is her being cast into exile, an experience of social isolation to parallel that suffered by Bisclavret (Bisclavret 305-06). There is, however, the difference that whereas for Bisclavret his bestial appearance was a contradiction of his inner character, for her there is a direct relationship between her less than human appearance and the inhumanity of her inner character.

The other character in the *lais* to effect a physical metamorphosis of Muldumarec in Yonec, transforming from hawk to knight. His case is, however, very different, as he is very specifically a being from the Other World<sup>4</sup>. He comes to the Real World to visit the woman he

loves, but it is never in this environment that he can exist. He has no place within the society to which the lady belongs, no feudal relationships or defined function. He might be described in conventional terms as a knightly hero of the lai, but it is, nonetheless, clear that he belongs to a hierarchical society in the Other World, parallelling that of the Real World. His supernatural identity is indicated by the fact of his physical transformation, and also by the description of his own country. This is reached when Muldumarec returns to die by passing through a hillside, one of the traditional folklore barriers between the Real World and the Other World (Yonec 346-56)<sup>5</sup>. Like many supernatural settings, it is extremely beautiful and built of precious materials (Yonec 360-64)<sup>6</sup>; it is also deserted: -

Unkes nuls a li ne parla,  
Humme ne femme n'i trova.

Yonec 375-76.

Muldumarec's supernatural identity is furthermore indicated by the magical ring that he gives to his mistress and which has the power of inducing forgetfulness (Yonec 415-20). There is, alongside his particular physical beauty as a man (Yonec 141-44), the fact also of his behaviour and general manner towards the lady. As with the fairies who come to visit mortal men, it is he who fully takes the initiative in the development of their relationship, telling the lady that he has come specifically to offer her his love (Yonec 124-34); warning her with prescience of the consequences of a lack of caution in her behaviour (Yonec 199-210). He chooses to take Holy Communion to prove that he is not an evil being, but primarily as a matter of expediency for the sake of his relationship with the lady (Yonec 145-92). His participation in the Real World is, indeed, limited to his involvement in this love relationship; he seeks no further degree of integration in society and is insistent

upon the necessity of returning to his own country in the Other World when he is dying.

The essence of Muldumarec's supernatural identity is inherited by his son, Yonec, and thus it is that ultimately it is not in the Real World that he is destined to find fulfilment. His role in the Real World is indeed only to avenge the death of his father, as is indicated by Muldumarec before the child is even born: -

De lui est enceinte d'enfant.  
Un fiz avra, pruz e vaillant;  
Icil la recunforterat.  
Yonec numer. le ferat.  
Il vengerat e lui e li,  
Il oscirat sun enemî.

Yonec 327-32.

As predicted, Yonec, as soon as he has killed his father's murderer and thereby fulfilled his active role in the Real World, leaves it to fulfil his true identity as his father's son, assuming his rightful crown in the Other World (Yonec 544-54).

Thus we see that as a result of their supernatural character, neither Muldumarec nor Yonec is destined to participate in more than a very limited way in the society of the Real World, through their relationships with the lady. It is not in this society that either can achieve fulfilment of his true identity. From this we find the following causal pattern: -

non human form  
(supernatural being) |  $\rightarrow$  | inability to be socially integrated in the  
| | | Real World

This same pattern is to be found in Tydorel, exploited in a similar way to affect both father and son<sup>7</sup>.

The supernatural identity of Tydorel's father is first manifested through the circumstances of his coming to visit the Queen,



approaching her when she is alone in an orchard. Orchards, like, although to a lesser extent than, forests provide a traditional setting for such encounters between beings of the two worlds. He more specifically indicates his origins by showing her the lake which marks the boundary to his own country (Tydorel 79-109). Thus he establishes beyond a doubt his identity as a being from the Other World. As such he has no defined social role to play in the Real World. As with Muldumarec, his involvement in this World is restricted to his love relationship with the Queen, a relationship that survives only for so long as it remains completely concealed from all other members of society. He remains, thus, very much on the fringes of society, even this degree of involvement in the Real World is only temporary, and there is, for narrative reasons, an inevitability about his ultimate, precipitate departure from it.

Tydorel, the son of the Other World knight, might appear to achieve a great deal of integration into society of the Real World; the son of the Queen of Brittany he is raised as the King's heir and succeeds to his throne. Yet for him also, this stay in the Real World is inevitably temporary, and even during this period of apparent social fulfilment, Tydorel remains something of a misfit. The fact of his intrinsic identity as being from the Other World is manifested by his inability to close his eyes or sleep (Tydorel 179-82). The fact of his not being mortal and of his not belonging to the Real World is made clear by the young boy who asserts: -

'por vérité que n'est pas d'ome  
qui ne dort ne qui ne prent somme!  
Tydorel 329-30.

Immediately Tydorel discovers the truth of his identity, he departs from the Real World, never to return, as he is aware that it is never in this environment that he can achieve fulfilment in his

destiny, this being possible only in the Other World of his father<sup>8</sup>.

In Lanval, Graelent, Guingamor and Desiré the beings from the Other World are the fairy mistresses who offer their love to the mortal heroes<sup>9</sup>. We have seen in the previous chapter, the extent to which these fairies contribute to the achievement of social fulfilment of their lovers. They, themselves, however, never seek to integrate directly into this Real World society, other than through their love relationships.

The fact of their supernatural identity is made very clear in each of the *lais*, even though not explicitly stated. As indicated in Chapter I, there is their extraordinary beauty that sets them apart from even the most beautiful of mortal ladies (Graelent 217-22; Guingamor 430-35; Desiré 188-92; Lanval 93-106). Consistent with their personal radiance is the beauty of their natural settings, comparable in luxury to Muldumarec's city. This is the case for the fairy's tent in Lanval (Lanval 80-92), and for the fairy's palace in Guingamor, which, like Muldumarec's city, is also deserted when first visited by Guingamor (Guingamor 363-81). Also indicative of their identity are the circumstances of the initial encounter between them and their mortal lovers. In each case this takes place when the knight is to a degree physically isolated from the courtly society to which he belongs. In three of the *lais* the setting is the depths of a forest (Guingamor 275-477; Graelent 194-298; Desiré 114-220); in the fourth it is in a meadow away from the town (Lanval 43-158). In each of the cases there are references to water, a motif much used in literature to symbolise or materialise the proximity of the Other World. In Graelent (208-58) and Guingamor (422-56), it is in the form of the pool in which the lady's maiden

is bathing. In Lanval, the detail is introduced in a more subtle way, a brief mention of the river that runs nearby (Lanval 45). In each these references to the physical setting serves, nonetheless, the same purpose of indicating to the reader that the lady is a fairy.

As such they restrict their contact with the Real World to what is necessitated by their love relationships with the mortal knights. None, we have seen, prevents her lover from returning to his natural environment after their first encounter, but each makes clear that she will not accompany him (Guingamor 545-74; Lanval 161; Graelent 326; Desiré 223,228). In Lanval, the fact of Lanval's return to Arthur's court does not prevent him from seeing his mistress as often as he wishes, but only for so long as their affair remains concealed from society. When finally the fairy does make an appearance at the royal court, it is exclusively for the sake of her lover, to prove his innocence at the trial; it is made obvious that this is the extent of her direct participation in this society, as she ignores the King's attempts to make her stay: -

E la pucele s'en depart,  
Ne la peot li reis retenir;  
Lanval 630-31.

As a being from the Other World, she has no interest in the forms of social fulfilment that can be offered to her in the Real World. Her natural environment is Avalun, and it is there that she returns at the end of the lai.

This limited relationship with the Real World is similar to that of the fairy in Graelent. She too will only visit Graelent in secret (Graelent 307-12), and manifestly has no desire to achieve any form of integration into the courtly society in which Graelent continues to exist. Like the lady in Lanval, her coming ultimately to the

court is prompted by the need of her lover, having ensured by her presence that he will be acquitted, she leaves immediately: -

Quant ele ot fait çou qu'ele quist  
e ot oïque li cors dist,  
congié demande e prent del roi  
e monte sor son palefroi.  
De la sale se departi,

Graelent 643-47.

This is her only attempt at fulfilling any active role in the Real World, from which she returns to her own country, clearly in the Other World, being reached only by crossing a perilous river (Graelent 653-708).

The lady in Guingamor remains apart from the Real World throughout the lai, in the forest and in her palace. Her relationship with the young knight from the Real World is conducted entirely in her own country, during the period of three hundred years that he spends there (Guingamor 479-532). Even when her lover has returned to the Real World and in direst need, she, unlike the fairy mistresses of Lanval and Graelent, does not go herself to save his life, but sends her maidens to do so (Guingamor 655-67). She is, thus, of all the fairy characters in the lais, the one to remain most isolated from the society of the Real World, both physically and in every other sense.

The lady in Desiré, on the other hand, is the one to make the greatest effort towards participation in the courtly society of the Real World to which her lover belongs. Although she is clearly derived from the same tradition of fairy mistresses as the ladies in Guingamor, Graelent and Lanval, the author of Desiré has sought more than the authors of the other lais to rationalise her, so that she appears closer to being a product of contemporary noble society than as a marvellous, but nonetheless alien, being. Not only is she

endowed with a Christian dimension to her identity, but she appears, indeed, as the mouthpiece of the author in her expressed views on love and religion. Her Christianity is, thus, far more an integral part of her character than it is of that of Muldumarec. This is indicated by the extent of her participation in the Christian society of her mortal lover. Although she does not accompany Desiré back to his own people and, like the other fairies, insists that their relationship should remain distinct from his life in society, she does come to him in his lodgings in the Real World during his illness (Desiré 356-408). Moreover she goes to church where she partakes of Holy Communion (Desiré 409-13), and sends her son to meet his father and to make contact with the chivalric society, of which he will subsequently become a member (Desiré 441-80). More particularly, at the end of the lai, she comes openly to the royal court, asking for her children to be accepted into it and to be married to Desiré in a ceremony condoned by the King and the Church. In seeking in this way to legalise her relationship with Desiré in accordance with the standards of society, she is demonstrating her espousal of those standards, as she makes clear in her statement as to why she wishes to marry Desiré: -

'Lealment serums assemblé,  
od mei vivra tut sun èë.  
Ja n'en quera confessiun,  
ne penitence, ne pardon!

Desiré 721-24.

No other fairy manifests such religious scruples; no other fairy makes an appearance at court in such circumstances: there is no trial here to compel her to come for the sake of her lover, her coming is, then, totally voluntary. Yet, even so positively upholding the values and morals of Real World society, she has no more intention than the other fairies of seeking to integrate this society. She might come to it in order to marry, but immediately afterwards she leaves with her new husband: -

Quant il esteient repeiré,  
la damaisele ad pris cungé;  
en sun país s'en volt aler,  
n'aveit cure de sojourner.

Desiré 745-48.

Thus, even in the case of this most self-consciously Christian of fairies, the degree of participation in society that she achieves, or seeks to achieve is very limited.

The children of this couple, Desiré and his mistress, have, clearly, a dual identity, with a mortal father and a fairy mother. Correspondingly, they live a dual existence, brought up by their mother in the Other World, then brought by her to achieve social fulfilment in the world of their father. Their position of mixed allegiance to two worlds is comparable to that of Tydorel and Yonec, all three ultimately in the world of their father, although in the case of Desiré's children this has taken them from the Other World to the Real World.

The princess in Tyolet, although different in the role that she plays, can be placed alongside the other fairy mistresses in terms of her identity as a being from the Other World. Her identity is indicated by her very great beauty (Tyolet 323-26), her haughtiness (Tyolet 322), which coincides with the tradition of the proud fairy, the circumstances of her coming to Arthur's court. She arrives, riding on a fine white palfrey (Tyolet 321-34); the description comparable to those to be found of the arrival at court of the fairies in Lanval, Graelent and Desiré. Her involvement in this courtly society is equally limited: she comes only to find a husband, and with no intention of seeking to be integrated.

It is also of interest in this context to consider the character of Tyolet himself. Although we have seen that he achieves a great deal

of success by the standards of the Arthurian court, it is possible to interpret him, nonetheless, as an outsider, and thus to read his departure with the princess to the Other World as the fulfilment of his true identity. That his character can be said to be partly supernatural is indicated by his magical whistling powers, by which he can lure animals to him and which were taught to him by a fairy (Tyolet 45-48). Furthermore, although the knightly identity of Tyolet's father is stressed, it is possible to surmise that his mother is less integrally a member of chivalric society. Certainly she has opted for an existence of physical isolation from such society, living and bringing up her son in a forest which is divided from the world in which Arthur's knights exist by a river. The details of this setting suggest its being part of the Other World<sup>10</sup>. It seems likely, therefore, that Tyolet is another child of mixed parentage who must achieve a degree of self-fulfilment in both the Real World and the Other World. Tyolet, thus, achieves social fulfilment at Arthur's court as an active knight, as is fitting for him as the son of a knight; but it is equally fitting that he should ultimately leave this existence for a return to the Other World.

It has been suggested that Lanval also is a being not fully of the Real World. This hypothesis rests to a large degree on the reading of his name as a near anagram of Avalun<sup>11</sup>. Thus his departure at the end of the lai for Avalun appears as the inevitable and natural fulfilment of his identity. Support for this argument is to be found in the emphasis in the text on his being an outsider and a misfit in the Arthurian court, never fully belonging to it, coming from another country. This is indicated from the very beginning of the lai: -

Mes luin ert de sun heritage!

Lanval 28.

And again at the time prior to the trial: -

Lanval fu suls e esgarez,  
N'i aveit parent ne ami.

Lanval 398-99.

Lanval's failure to be socially integrated is indicated also by his twice being forgotten by those who are central figures of the Arthurian world, firstly by Arthur himself, who neglects to include Lanval in the distribution of fiefs. It is stressed that this is not deliberate, but an oversight: -

Ceo fu Lanval; ne l'en sovint

Lanval 19.

It is also specifically by an oversight that Gauvain and the other knights of the Round Table omit him from their number in the Whitsun celebrations, albeit temporarily (Lanval 225-36). That Lanval should be so easily overlooked and excluded from the main company of knights at the court is an indication that he is not integrally a member of it himself. Thus established throughout the lai as an outsider from this courtly society, Lanval's departure from it becomes, then, the natural fulfilment of his identity. This appears especially true as his departure occurs at a time when Arthur and his knights are keener than at any other time to integrate Lanval into their society. Lanval's departure is, therefore, very specifically the consequence of his own decision, perhaps as a result of his realisation that it is not in the Real World that he can ever be truly fulfilled or integrated.

For each of these characters, whether wholly or partly from the supernatural world, we find the same pattern emerging: that such characters can never achieve complete social fulfilment in the Real World. If some achieve partial fulfilment in this society it is because they possess a human side to their identity which must also find expression, but which cannot dominate their supernatural side.



## 2. Loss of Family Identity

We have seen in the previous chapter the importance of there being a connection between the individual and his/her family as a means of defining his/her basic social identity. In several lays, however, we find circumstances that cause there to be a breach in this connection, which can on occasion lead to individuals suffering very extreme forms of social non-fulfilment<sup>12</sup>.

This is the case in Haveloc. Born the son of the King of Denmark, Haveloc is by a series of circumstances which cause him to suffer both physical and social displacement. The essential severance with his family and his family identity is brought about by the murder of his father by Odulf (Haveloc 33-36). Thus the whole of Haveloc's suffering is traceable back to an act of vassalic betrayal, as is made clear in the text: -

Li reis meïsmes fu oscis  
E plusurs altres del país;  
Odulf l'oscist par traïsun  
Ki tuz jor<sup>z</sup> ot le quer felun.

Haveloc 33-36.

It is in direct consequence of Gunter's death that Haveloc is taken away from his native country by Grim, although this is specifically in order to save Haveloc's life, it is, nonetheless an exile imposed upon him by circumstances (Haveloc 59-68; 89-109). It is during the journey into exile that Haveloc's mother is killed by pirates (Haveloc 110-22). This is the breaking of the last direct bond between Haveloc and his family. The indirect links are also cut, with Haveloc deprived of all knowledge of his true identity as the son of King Gunter and the rightful King of Denmark. He is brought up far away from his own home in the fishing community of Grimsby, with no contact with the world of royalty and nobility which is his natural social milieu. He believes himself to be the son of Grim,

and even his name is changed from Haveloc to Cuaran: -

Grim li ot fet changer sun nun  
Ke part tant nel con[e]ust l'um.  
Haveloc 149-50.

As with all of Grim's actions on Haveloc's behalf, this is motivated by the best of intentions, but the results in terms of Haveloc's social isolation are nonetheless extreme. Throughout his childhood there is apparently no chance of Haveloc's ever reclaiming his rightful position in society, as the King of Denmark, cut off from this by ignorance as well as by geographical distance and social displacement. The importance of the consequences of his lack of self-knowledge is stressed through the lai. Grim is aware of the unsuitability of Haveloc's upbringing, which allows him to develop none of the requisite skills of chivalry or kingship: -

Mes de co ot le quer dolent  
K'il n'ert norri entre tel gent  
Ou il p[e]ust alques entendre  
Afetement e sens aprendre;  
Kar il quidot en sun corage  
K'uncore avreit sun heritage  
Haveloc 161-66

Unable to participate in the social milieu to which he is naturally suited, Haveloc is unfitted to fulfil any role in the society in which he is living, as Grim says: -

'Ici manum sutivement  
Od pescheurs, od povre gent,  
Ki sa garissent par pescher.  
Tu ne sez ren de lur mester;  
Ici ne poez saveir nul ben  
Ne ja ne g[e]igneras ren.  
Haveloc 169-74.

Thus, the circumstances of his upbringing have caused Haveloc to be in every way a social misfit, redundant in any social context. It is for this reason the Grim sends him to Edelsi's court to provide him with some chance of attaining a degree of social fulfilment (Haveloc 175-86). The move to a more suitable social environment, the royal court, is not, however, sufficient to restore him to his

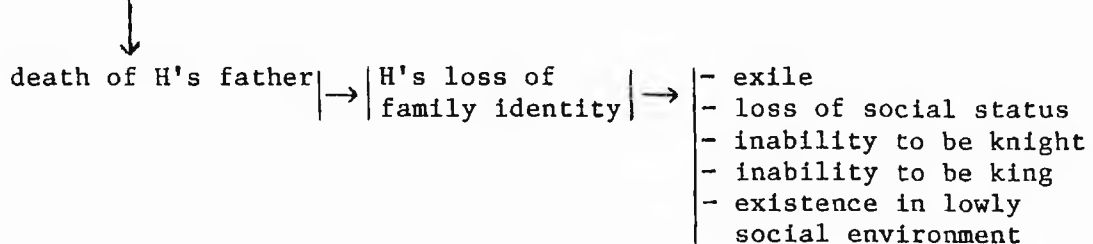
rightful position in society. He remains almost as distant as ever from his true social status, being employed at the court as a scullion, surely the basest of functions in the social hierarchy (Haveloc 243-62).

Neither is his marriage to Argentille enough in itself to lead Haveloc away from such social displacement, intended as it is to reduce Argentille to the apparent social level of Cuaran/Haveloc rather than to elevate him to her royal level (Haveloc 381-87). It is in fact a marriage that is socially very desirable for one of Haveloc's true rank, but it is almost only by chance that it provides a key towards Haveloc's social fulfilment. This is brought about not by the fact of the marriage, but by Argentille's finding out the significance of her dream about Haveloc (Haveloc 401-588).

As Haveloc's degeneration into extreme social isolation was brought about in a series of interlocking stages, so his progression towards ultimate social reintegration follows the same pattern. There is no immediate leap from social non-fulfilment to complete social fulfilment. In each of the intermediary stages Haveloc continues in some way or other to be unfulfilled in his destiny. For a period after the hermit's interpretation of Argentille's dream, Haveloc remains still uncertain of his true identity or role in society, he remains still in exile. Even when he has reached the point of knowing who he is, and of returning to Denmark, he is still, nonetheless, unable to fulfil his essential social role of kingship. This is achieved only as the final outcome of his efforts, when he defeats Odulf in combat; until this point there has been no certainty that his rightful throne would ever be his, and that he would not, rather be forced for ever to be a social misfit.

The most extreme point in Haveloc's experience of social isolation lasts the duration of his childhood. This is reached through a chain of events, as can be indicated in a schema: -

betrayal of bad  
vassal (Odulf)



Although evidently something of a simplification, this indicates how closely related are the different forms of social non-fulfilment, and also the crucial importance in social terms of the individual being deprived of his family identity.

Intertwined with Haveloc's experiences are those of Argentille. Although her experiences of social non-fulfilment are never as extreme as those of Haveloc - she is never deprived of the knowledge of her identity or of the role that is rightfully hers to fulfil in society - they are comparable to his. She too is prevented from fulfilling her primary role in society as a queen, and thereby of fulfilling any active role in society. As for Haveloc, there is a causal relationship between the different forms of social non-fulfilment from which she suffers. These can be traced back to the death of her father. This in itself ought not to have caused her to be socially displaced, her welfare entrusted to her uncle Edelsi, with instructions that she be married suitably once she comes of age. Achebrit's premature death is, nonetheless, an essential contributory factor. The true responsibility for her plight lies, however, with Edelsi, who, like Odulf, seeks to advance his own ambitions through betrayal and disloyalty. It is he who

prevents her from claiming her throne by usurping it for himself

(Haveloc 306-42): -

Mes il voleit melz suffrir guere  
K'estre dessaisi[z]de la terre.

Haveloc 313-14.

Edelsi's marrying Argentille to Haveloc is explicitly motivated by his desire to ensure that she can never assert her social rights: -

Sa nece lur fet amener  
E a Cuaran espuser.  
Pur li aviler e honir  
La fet la nuit lez lui gisir.

Haveloc 381-84.

Here, then, is an utter perversion of the political justification of the institution of the arranged marriage. Rather than serving to enhance Argentille's position in society, this match is intended to deprive her of any hopes of social fulfilment, either through her own authority or through marriage. Certainly, this marriage represents for her the most extreme point in her experience of social non-fulfilment. We have already noted the irony that exists in the contrast between the apparent degradation of the marriage and its actual function in enabling her ultimately to be restored to her throne. As for Haveloc, this process towards complete fulfilment of her role in society is a gradual one. Even when Haveloc has reclaimed his own throne of Denmark, she is aware of her own lack; at this time she is in exile from her own country, still deprived of her rights as queen: -

Argentille li conseilla  
K'il passast [mer] en Engleterre  
Pur sun heritage conquere  
Dunt sis uncles l'aveit jetée  
E a grant tort desheritée.

Haveloc 984-88.

As for Haveloc, we see how there is interrelation between various forms of social non-fulfilment in Argentille's experience. We, also see again how serious the consequences can be of a breach in the

direct line of descent from parent to child.

In Fresne, a very different lai, we see also how far reaching the consequences of such a breach can be. Fresne, like Haveloc, suffers extreme social displacement, prevented from achieving any real degree of fulfilment in society, as a result of being deprived of the knowledge of her parents' identity and, therefore, of her own. The circumstances that lead to this are, however, very different. Here it is Fresne's own mother who makes the voluntary decision of abdicating her maternal responsibilities, by denying the very existence of her infant child<sup>13</sup>. The importance in social terms of the role of motherhood has already been indicated; this highlights the seriousness of her crime against both her child and her husband, who does not even know of the birth of his second daughter. The mother is prompted in her actions by a selfish desire to protect her own honour from accusations of adultery. Her fear arises from the fact of her own slanders in this way against a neighbour's wife who bore twins. It is because of this that Fresne's mother laments over the birth of her own twins: -

'Ore en ai deus! Ceo m'est avis,  
Sur mei en est turnez li pis!  
Ki sur autrui mesdit e ment  
Ne seit mie qu'a l'oïl li pent;  
De tel hume peot l'um parler  
Ki mieuz de lui fet a loër.  
Pur mei defendre de hunir,  
Un des enfanz m'estuet murdrir;  
Mieuz le voil vers Deu amender  
Que mei hunir e vergunder.'

Fresne 85-94.

The mother may in such terms be able to justify to herself her decision to dispose of her baby daughter, but Marie has no sympathy for her, criticising her in harsher terms than she uses for any other character in her lais: -

Kar ele ert feinte e orguilluse  
E mesdisanz e enviuse.

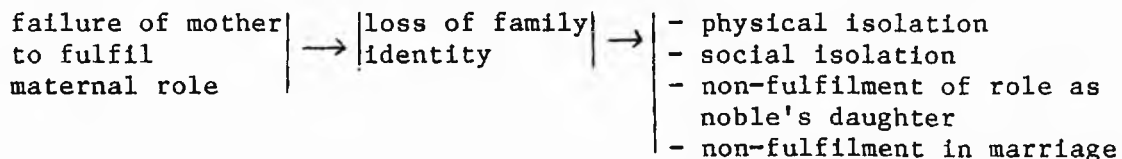
Fresne 27-28.

The fate that befalls Fresne is at least less extreme than that initially intended for her by her mother, she is spared from instant death by the intervention of her mother's 'dameisele' (Fresne 107-16). She is, nonetheless, cast out by her mother, taken through a thick forest away from her own country to be abandoned to God's mercy, and a fate that might still be death (Fresne 135-74). The abandonment of her in this way on the edge of a town is the most extreme point in her social isolation, separated from family, from her own country, from her own identity, from all contact with any form of human society.

As for Haveloc and Argentille, the process that leads from this most extreme point to her ultimate achievement of social fulfilment is a gradual one. Each of the intermediary stages leads to the next, although not inevitably; each is a positive development for her towards the culmination of her marriage to Gurun. However, at each point on the way - her being found by the porter, her upbringing at the convent<sup>14</sup>, her living with Gurun - she remains as a social misfit, the inevitable price of being a foundling without a definite social identity. Without the key to her own identity through the knowledge of the identity of her parents<sup>15</sup>, Fresne continues to be locked out from full participation in noble society, and because of the evidence of her noble birth (the coverlet and the ring), she has no place at any other level of society. Without this key, Fresne, despite her unquestionable qualities is powerless to claim the position in society to which she is so evidently suited.

Thus, as in Haveloc, we see how disastrous the breach between parent

and child can be in social terms, as well as in personal terms in this case. The relationship between the different forms of social non-fulfilment is indicated in the following schema, which again focuses on the central importance of the loss of family identity: -



Other characters in the *lais* also find themselves unable to achieve complete social fulfilment as a result of a disjuncture with their family identity.

This is the case of Tyolet, who grows up without knowing that he is the son of a knight, and that as such it is his social role also to be knight. Again ignorance is a primary factor in Tyolet's experience of social isolation. So far distanced is he from the chivalric existence that was his father's that he does not even know what a knight is, as is indicated by his questions to the stag/knight (*Tyolet* 131-246). His isolation from knightly society is due partly to his father's death, but more specifically to the decision by his mother to bring him up alone in the forest, for reasons suggested earlier in this section. Tyolet's existence is, thus, apparently hermetically sealed from all social contact, both by physical separation and by a lack of knowledge; from such circumstances it seems unlikely that Tyolet will have any opportunity of achieving fulfilment of the knightly side of his identity<sup>16</sup>. The extent of Tyolet's isolation not only from courtly society but from all human society is made evident from the description of his lifestyle, which stresses the deprivation he unwittingly experiences: -



e Tyolet fu biaux e granz,  
mes onques chevalier armé  
n'ot veü en tot son aé,  
ne autres genz gueres sovent  
n'ot il pas veü ensement.  
El bois o sa mere manoit,  
onques jor fors issu n'avoit,  
en la forez ot sejourné,

Tyolet 56-63.

This episode of Tyolet's life in the forest is clearly comparable to the initial episode in the Conte du Graal, in which Perceval lives in the forest with his mother (Conte du Graal 69-495). Although Mortimer J. Donovan believes there to be no direct link between the two texts<sup>17</sup>, the possibility of the anonymous poet's having known Chrétien's work cannot be dismissed entirely. We note one of the differences between the two in the explanation that Perceval's mother gives of her reasons for keeping her son apart from the knightly society that she knows to be his natural environment. In Tyolet no such explicit explanation is offered. This might be because the anonymous author, knowing the Conte du Graal and taking on board the mother's explanations, felt no need to draw particular attention to them in his own text.

There is also the possibility of the fairy nature of the mother, in Tyolet, inherited by the son, as a determining factor in this early part of his life being spent in such isolation from the knightly society of the Real World<sup>18</sup>.

From the combination of these factors, we see how the loss of family affects Tyolet in terms of his social isolation: -

- death of father	→	loss of family identity	→	- physical isolation from all human society
- supernatural as anti-social force (mother)				- ignorance of chivalry
				- non-fulfilment as knight
				- non-fulfilment in feudal relationships

In Milun we find the case of another child who grows up without contact with his father. The circumstances that lead to this are similar to those that deprive Fresne of contact with her family, although his situation is never as extreme as hers. The boy's mother, like the mother in Fresne, decides to give her son in order to conceal the fact of his birth. This denial of her child, and of her maternal responsibilities, is also motivated by a concern for her own honour: -

S'onur e sun bien ad perdu,  
Quant de tel fet s'est entremise;  
Milun 58-59.

Marie does not, however, apply the same censure against the mother in Milun as she does against Fresne's mother, justifying her to some extent. The mother here is forced to give up her child, partly because of her own lack of mesure in sleeping with the man she loves while unmarried, and partly because of the pressures of an excessively harsh society. It is not only her honour that she is likely to lose, but also her life: -

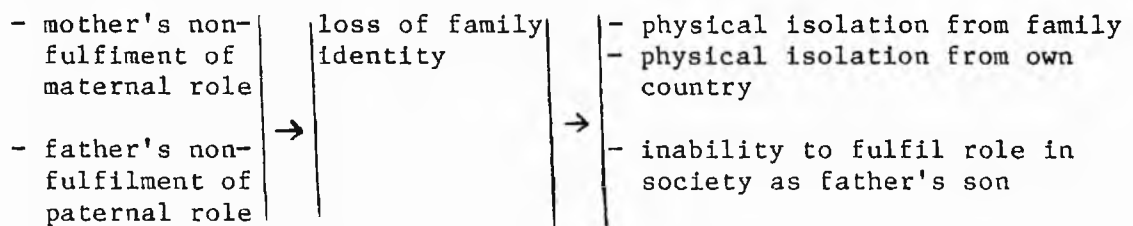
De li ert faite granz justise:  
A gleive serat turmentee  
U vendue en autre cuntree.  
Ceo fu custume as anciens,  
Issi teneient en cel tens.  
Milun 60-64.

The mother is, thus, provided by the author with considerable justification for her behaviour<sup>19</sup>, and, unlike Fresne's mother, she has the support of the child's father, Milun, in her decisions over the child's fate: -

Milun respunt que il fera  
Ceo que ele cunseillera.  
Milun 65-66.

The son is taken away from his mother shortly after birth. He is not abandoned to his fate in the wild, as is the case in Fresne, but is taken to his mother's sister in Northumberland, who raises him

(Milun 67-120). He does not, therefore, suffer the same degree of social displacement that is suffered by other characters in the lais. He does, nonetheless, grow up in physical isolation from his parents, without direct knowledge of their identity. It is only when he is of age to be knighted himself that he learns of the knightly reputation of his father, who then serves as a model to him while he seeks to be reunited with Milun<sup>20</sup>. The son here clearly feels the lack of contact with his parents to be a serious deprivation, felt even when in other ways - as an active knight - he has achieved a degree of social fulfilment. This emphasises the importance of this family/child bond as an essential key to the complete fulfilment of the individual in the society to which he is suited. We see again the inevitable interaction between the different forms of social non-fulfilment:-



There exist parallels to some of the experiences of Milun's son and those of the son in Doon, as has previously been indicated. The son in Doon also grows up without direct contact with his father, although he is brought up by his mother and in adherence to his father's instructions. Even in such circumstances there is a deprivation for the boy. In the case of Doon, the abandonment of his son, even before the child is born, is completely voluntary and in response to no external pressures, social or otherwise. The only explanation that he offers for his actions is his desire to return to his own country: -

q'aler s'en velt en sa contree.  
Doon166.

His behaviour is, however, subsequently justified as a well-deserved punishment of his excessively proud wife, as Doon explains to his son at the time of their reunion: -

'molt est orgueilleuse ta mere,'  
Doon 264.

This brings the responsibility for the circumstances of the son's deprived childhood away from the father to the mother as being the one essentially, if unwittingly, to blame.

Of all the children in the lais to grow up without direct contact with their fathers, Doon's son is the one to suffer least acutely from social displacement as a consequence. This is because although not physically active in the education of the boy, Doon has fulfilled his paternal responsibilities towards him by ensuring that he is educated in a way that is consistent with his birth.

Desiré's children are also raised without direct contact with their father. This is wholly on the initiative of their mother, as it seems Desiré is not even aware of his own fatherhood. It is she who brings them up, not only in isolation from their father, but also from the courtly society of the Real World to which their father belongs. More specifically than is the case for Tyolet, it is in the Other World that these children are brought up. The decision by the fairy to bring up her children in isolation from the world and society of their father is partly explicable in terms of her own fairy identity. It is also motivated by Desiré's betrayal of her, in confessing about their love relationship to the hermit. It is after this that she chooses to have no more contact with Desire as a punishment to him (Desiré 277-398). Thus, although it is the fairy who makes the decision to bring up her children in such

circumstances, some of the responsibility falls, nonetheless, on Desiré.

- supernatural mother	→	loss of family identity (D's children)	→	- physical isolation from father
- D's betrayal of mistress				- isolation from Real World
				- isolation from noble society

We see from these examples how different the circumstances can be that lead to the severance of the essential bond between parent and child. In all cases the ignorance of the identity of the parents is a crucial factor, more serious in social terms than the fact of physical separation. The consequences of this voluntary/involuntary separation can be very extreme in terms of the social isolation experienced by the child, but not necessarily so. There is, nonetheless, inevitably a degree of social displacement and consequent non-fulfilment suffered by any such child; without knowledge as to the identity of his/her parents, the child grows up unable ever to fully fulfil his/her own identity in society, unable to assume the role in that society that is his/her birthright.

Very different from any of these cases, but nonetheless related, is that of the vilain in the Lai de l'Oiselet. Here we find an individual who is deliberately attempting to assume a position in knightly society that is not his birthright, and that represents, therefore, an attempt to negate his true family identity. Having acquired a wealth greater than that of most men of his social rank (Oiselet 3-6), he attempts to adopt the lifestyle of a knight. In order to do this he buys a castle that has previously always belonged to knights: -

Ainz fu uns chevaliers gentiz.  
Après le pere l'ot li filz,  
Qui le vendi a cel vilain.

Oiselet 23-25.

Despite his assuming the trappings of the nobility, his appreciation

of these trappings is founded on base values and he remains a social misfit. He can never achieve forms of social fulfilment that are suited to a man of noble birth, however much he might aspire to doing so, because he cannot divorce himself from the materialistic concerns that are characteristic of his non-noble birth. This emerges through his relationship with the sweet-singing bird, which he captures with the intention of selling (Oiselet 184-86) The bird sings: -

'Et li vilain sont li mauvais,'  
Oiselet 151.

This clearly expresses the author's own attitude against the social climbing ambitions of this parvenu. This attitude is expressed not solely in a literary context, but is an echo of the antagonism of the nobility against a prospering section of non-noble society<sup>21</sup>. It is as a result of the bird's cunning that the vilain's true character reveals itself. The bird, having been captured by the vi an, offers to instruct him in three elements of wisdom which will allow him to distinguish himself from his family. The bird says: -

'De .iij. sens vous feroie sage  
Qu'aïnc ne sot hon de vo lignage,  
Si te porroient mout valoir'.  
Oiselet 241-43.

Clearly this idea of being able to prove himself superior to, and therefore distinct from, his own family and social background appeals particularly to the vilain, as he echoes the bird's words when he finds himself to have been deceived: -

' .III. sens me devoies aprendre,  
Si con tu me feïs entendre,  
Qu'aïnc ne sot hon de mon lignage,'  
Oiselet 265-67.

The three elements of wisdom that the bird upholds are, one, that one must not cry over that which one has never had (Oiselet 261), two, that one must not believe all one is told (Oiselet 291), third,

that one must not throw away what one holds in one's hand (Oiselet 316-17). Despite his claims to possess all of these elements of wisdom, the vilain in fact proves himself to possess none of them, as the bird says to him: -

'Vilains, or en droit prové t'ai  
Que des .iij. sens pas ne savoies,'  
Oiselet 372-73.

The vilain thereby proves himself fundamentally unworthy of the type of social fulfilment to which he has been aspiring. The beauties and pleasure of the garden are rightfully the privileges of the knightly class and, therefore, are not his birthright as a vilain. It is not by aping the lifestyle of the aristocracy that he can find his place in society. His unworthiness revealed, he is justly punished by the departure from the garden of the bird, by the withering of the flowers; the vilain is left in the denuded garden (Oiselet 381-90).

Li vilains perdi son deduit.  
Oiselet 387.

Having turned his back on the forms of social fulfilment that correspond to the social status of his family, and lacking the qualities required of a knight, he is left without a chance of achieving any real degree of social fulfilment.

In Narcisus, Dané, in very different circumstances, tries to repudiate her family identity to free herself from the social role that is determined by that identity. She is throughout the lai very aware of the social status of her parents, and of the implications that this has for her in terms of correct behaviour, the expectations of society that places restraints upon her. The relationship between family identity and her own social role is here very close. Thus, when Dané leaves the town - physically isolating

herself from society - to offer herself to Narcissus - in a way that is most improper for one of her social status - it is not only a deliberate gesture against the fulfilment of her own role in society; it is also a self-conscious attempt to deny her family identity (Narcissus 425-1010). From Dané's own words when she is alone in the forest, we see the extent to which she is aware of the significance in such terms of her actions: -

'Qui sui je donc? Qui est mes pere?  
Li rois est. Ore et qui ma mere?  
Donc ne ses tu qui? La roïne!  
Mençongne est! Ains sui orfeline:  
Je n'ai ami, je n'ai parent;  
Je n'ai conseil de baine gent.'

Narcissus 599-604.

'Ja soloie je estre plus sage.  
Sui je devenue sauvage?  
Que faz en bois? Que sui or quisse?'

Narcissus 607-09.

In isolating herself from civilised society and from the values of that society, she loses all sense of her own identity, a sense of identity that has hitherto been founded primarily in the social identity of her parents as King and Queen. There is not here a relationship of cause and effect between the different aspects of her social non-fulfilment as they are too tightly intertwined. The motivation for Dané's repudiation of society and for her self-isolation lies in her love for Narcissus, a factor that will be considered later in this chapter.

### 3. Non-Fulfilment of the Lord-Vassal Relationship

In the previous chapter we saw the crucial importance that this relationship has in the feudal society of the *lais*. We saw that such relationships could only exist in a balance and function effectively to the benefit of both parties when founded on



reciprocity. The cause for a breach or permanent collapse of such relationships is often to be found in a failure of this essential reciprocity, when there is an inequality in the degree of commitment to the relationship of either of the parties.

This is what we find in the case of Lanval. Lanval has served his lord, Arthur, well and loyally, but fails to enjoy the degree of fulfilment within the Arthurian court that should rightfully be his because of Arthur's failure to reciprocate. In Arthur, indeed, we find an image of a king failing to fulfil one of his most basic seigniorial obligations towards a vassal<sup>22</sup>: he fails in his duty to reward Lanval for his services: -

Femmes e teres departi,  
Fors a un sul ki l'ot servi:  
Ceo fut Lanval; ne l'en sovint

Lanval 17-19.

Arthur is clearly aware of his role vis-à-vis his men, as evidenced by his distribution of fiefs to the others at his court: -

Asez i duna riches duns  
E as cuntes e as baruns.

Lanval 13-14.

His failure as king is, then, not absolute, affecting only his relationship with Lanval, and this not out of deliberate ill-will, but forgetfulness. Thus, there is some degree of attenuation for Arthur's non-observance of his responsibilities. Whether maliciously intended or not, the consequences of his failure are nonetheless far reaching. Lanval appears wholly as an innocent victim, as such he would be justified by the terms of such feudal relationships to respond by abjuring his own obligations. Although Lanval does not turn against the King, the bond of reciprocity has nonetheless been broken, and, as a result, Lanval is unable to participate actively in court society. The lifestyle of a knight

was an expensive one to maintain; we have seen that it was expected of him to be free in his expenditure and in particular to be generous to others. The importance of this aspect of the life of a knight is, indeed, highlighted later in the lai (Lanval 205-14). After Arthur fails to include him in the distribution of gifts, Lanval no longer has the wherewithal to support such a lifestyle<sup>23</sup>. He, in consequence, becomes an isolated figure in the court, unable to fulfil any function within it in the way that is suitable for one of his social status: -

Tut sun aveir ad despendu,  
Kar li reis rien ne li dona  
Ne Lanval ne li demanda.  
Ore est Lanval mut entrepris,  
Mut est dolenz, mut est pensis!

Lanval 30-34.

We see from this how unequivocally the blame is attributed to Arthur and that, despite his unhappiness over the situation and the awareness that it is wrong, Lanval is a passive figure, doing nothing to assert his vassalic rights.

If the primary fault lies with the King himself, the rest of his court cannot be exempted from blame, contributing by their indifference to Lanval's isolation in society. Indeed, they are in a sense more to be criticised than Arthur, whereas his failing is largely one of forgetfulness, their indifference is deliberate, based on their envy of Lanval for his obvious qualities: -

Pur sa valur, pur sa largesce,  
Pur sa beauté, pur sa pruesce,  
L'envioent tuit li plusur;  
Tels li mustra semblant d'amur,  
S'al chevalier mesavenist,  
Ja une feiz ne l'en pleinsist!

Lanval 21-26.

Their behaviour towards Lanval manifests a spirit very different from the solidarity that should ideally characterise the

relationships between the knights of a same court.

A further contributory factor, as already indicated, is the fact of Lanval's being an outsider in the court, far away from his own country: -

Fiz a rei fu, de haut parage,  
Mes luin ert de sun heritage!

Lanval 27-28.

This distance from his own country certainly contributes to his sense of isolation, with which Marie evidently sympathises: -

Ore est Lanval mut entrepris,  
Mut est dolenz, mut est pensis!  
Seignurs, ne vus esmerveillez:  
Hum estrange descunseillez,  
Mut est dolenz en autre tere,  
Quant il ne seit u sucurs quere!

Lanval 33-38.

All these factors combine to force Lanval into a wretched situation, unable to achieve any of the fulfilment in Arthurian court society that he might justifiably expect to be his.

His riding out alone from the town into the meadows (Lanval 39-52), is clearly necessary for the sake of the narrative, to enable Lanval to meet the fairy. It is, however, also a gesture expressive of his sense of social isolation, and it is specifically contrasted with his previous attempts at active participation in society, of which the reader is reminded: -

Li chevaliers dunt jeo vus di,  
Ki tant aveit le rei servi,

Lanval 39-40.

This is certainly no pleasure jaunt, for the sake of the beauties of nature<sup>24</sup>, as is made clear from the further reference to his unhappiness over his lack of social fulfilment: -

Mut est pensis pur sa mesaise,  
Il ne veit chose ki li plaise.

Lanval 51-52.

It does not, however, represent a repudiation of courtly society, which retains his allegiance, as is demonstrated by his willingness to return to it and participate actively in it after his first encounter with the fairy. His loyalty and sense of vassallic obligation to Arthur are also manifest in this period after this fateful encounter, expressed specifically in his rejection of the Queen's amorous advances (Lanval 269-302). Yet it seems, nonetheless, that Lanval is still not fully integrated into the life of this court. Despite Lanval's own continuing commitment to his relationship with Arthur, there is no suggestion that Arthur is in any positive way reciprocating or that he has compensated for his earlier injustice against Lanval. This impression of Lanval's still being a misfit in the court is reinforced by the fact of the knights' accidental exclusion of him in their Midsummer festivities (Lanval 219-33). Lanval's position in terms of social relationships is, nevertheless, nowhere near as extreme as it was in the period before his riding out of town. It has already been stressed that the omission of him by the knights on this occasion is both involuntary and temporary.

This period appears, then, as a lull in Lanval's relationships with society, prior to the second specific breach in his relationship with Arthur. The circumstances that lead to this are traceable back to Lanval's justified repudiation of the Queen's advances. The direct cause, however, is the Queen's response: her anger at being in this way rejected and at Lanval's claim that his mistress is more beautiful than her. In her anger she seeks to turn Arthur against Lanval, claiming that Lanval has propositioned her (Lanval 316-17) and has boasted of the beauty of his mistress in order to dishonour the Queen's reputation (Lanval 319-24). The Queen's accusations

are, thus, a mixture of truth and fabrication. Lanval is, nonetheless, wholly innocent of her principal accusation that he was deliberately seeking to dishonour her, his claims about the superior beauty of his mistress and her maidens being, after all, justified, and certainly he does not wish to bring about the collapse in his relationship with Arthur that ensues. It is Arthur who formally takes the initiative in this, but, because he not surprisingly believes his wife's version of events, he does so in the belief that he is responding to an act of vassallic disloyalty by Lanval - a gesture of disrespect against the Queen is equally one against himself - hence his reproaches against Lanval: -

'Vassal, vus m'avez mut mesfait;  
Trop comengastes vilein plait  
De mei hunir e avillier  
E la reïne ledengier!'

Lanval 363-66.

This second rift between Lanval and the King again causes Lanval to become an isolated figure in the court, unable to participate in its life. It is, however, essentially different in character: it is public and is dealt with in a way that is formally correct within the feudal judicial system. The fact of this, culminating in the trial itself, allows Lanval the chance of being officially rehabilitated and of being permitted to resume his rightful position in society. This contrasts with the circumstances of the initial collapse of the lord-vassal relationship, in which, because of the underhand way in which Lanval was treated, there was no obvious or direct means to a reconciliation.

This essential difference in the legality of the proceedings and the sympathetic attitude of the Arthurian knights (as considered in Chapter II), does apparently nothing to make this experience of social non-fulfilment any more bearable for Lanval. Repeatedly

there are references to his unhappiness, and in particular to his being far way from his own country and his own people: -

Lanval fu suls e esgarez,  
N'i aveit parent ne ami.

Lanval 398-99.

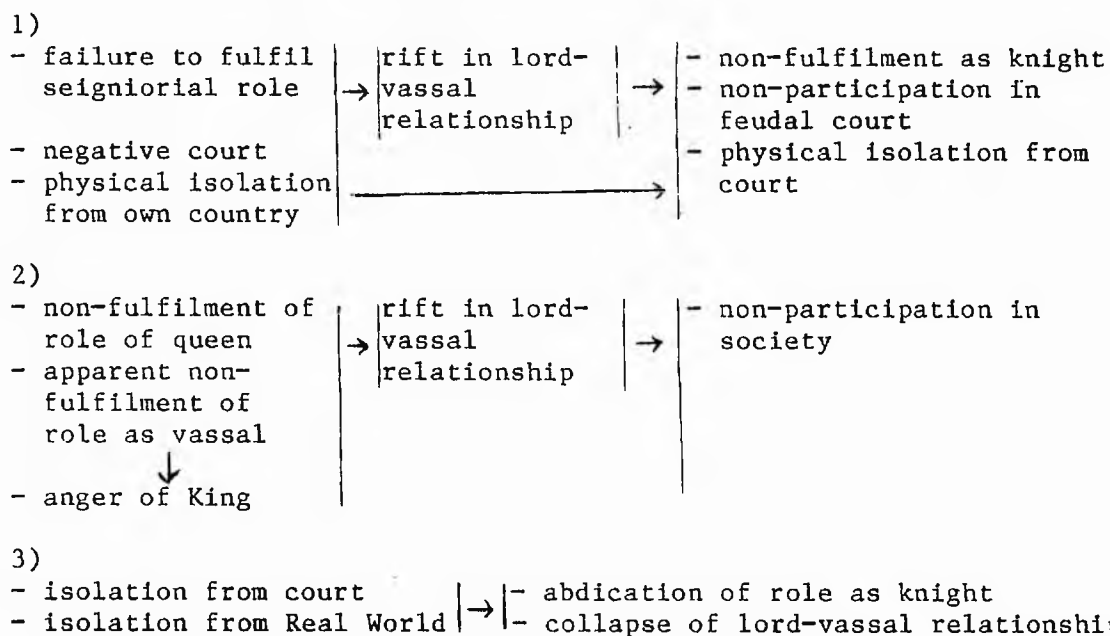
Del franc humme d'autre païs  
Ki entre eus ert si entrepris.

Lanval 429-30.

What is crucial here is a fundamental change in Lanval's attitude to society. Whereas at the time of the initial rift, his unhappiness was due solely to his failure to achieve fulfilment in social terms; now, by contrast, his concerns are more directed towards his lack of fulfilment in love, an aspect that will be considered in some detail subsequently. In terms of his relationship with the King and the court, what is essential in this change is that even in the period preceding the trial social fulfilment is no longer the priority for Lanval. He has lost his commitment to seeking fulfilment within that society, as emerges significantly at the end of the lai when he chooses to depart from the Arthurian court forever. The irony of his making this decision at this time has already been noted; in terms of his relationship specifically with Arthur it represents a reversal of the initial situation. Here again there is a breach in the relationship, due to a lack of reciprocity, but now it is Lanval who is the one to abdicate his obligations within it.

It must, however, be stressed that this in itself does not represent a repudiation of the Arthurian court and its values, any more than did his previous riding out of court. No such anti-social attitude is suggested within the text, what appears rather is that this is a personal decision based more on a desire for fulfilment in love than on any denial of the value of social fulfilment.

As in the other lais that have been looked at in this chapter, we see from Lanval that forms of social non-fulfilment exist in causal relationships; here, the crucial factor is not the rift between parent and child but between lord and vassal. In Lanval we see how this rift can be brought about by different circumstances on three separate occasions, with a variety of consequences. The nature of the interaction between the different forms of social non-fulfilment can be seen clearly from the three following schemas, the first relating to the initial episode prior to Lanval's encounter with the fairy; the second to the circumstances surrounding the trial; and the third to events following the trial:-



In Eliduc, we find another king whose failure towards a loyal vassal has far reaching consequences. In this case it is the King of Brittany who reveals a lack of judgment in giving credence to the slanders of losengiers against Eliduc. Unlike the Arthurian knights in Lanval, the losengiers here are directly to blame for the estrangement between lord and vassal, deliberately turning the King against Eliduc, but the motivation is the same: envy of Eliduc's qualities: -

Pur l'envie del bien de lui,  
Si cum avient sovent d'autrui,  
Esteit a un seignur medlez  
E empeiriez e encusez,  
Que de la curt le cuncea  
Sanz ceo qu'il ne l'areisuna.

Eliduc 41-46.

Eliduc, who is a knight endowed with many qualities and who has served his king well, appears, like Lanval, as an innocent victim. The King of Brittany's treatment of Eliduc is clearly unjustified, and an abuse of his feudal authority, as is evident from his summary dismissal of Eliduc, whom he allows no chance to defend his vassalic rights or to make an attempt at reconciliation: -

Soventefeiz requist le rei  
Qu'il escundit de lui preïst  
E que losenge ne creïst:  
Mut l'aveit volentiers servi!  
Mes li reis ne li respundi.

Eliduc 48-52.

Thus, again we see that the responsibility for the breach in relations between lord and vassal is totally in the hands of one of the two partners, whose lack of commitment to the preservation of the relationship completely overrides the continued commitment of the other. Eliduc is powerless against the ingratitude and lack of appreciation of his lord, whose disaffection makes it impossible for Eliduc to participate actively in society. As a direct result of the rift between him and the King, Eliduc is forced into exile from his own country; this not only means that he is unable to fulfil his vassalic role in the service of the King, but also that he must abandon his own seigniorial responsibilities, and those to his wife. For Eliduc, then, the consequences of this rift are extreme in terms of the degree of social non-fulfilment that he is forced to suffer. Yet despite the King's failure to fulfil his part in what should be a reciprocal relationship, Eliduc never repudiates his own obligations, as would in such circumstances be his right.



The consequences of the King's failure, although more fundamentally affecting Eliduc's position in Breton society, are felt also by the King, whose royal authority is destabilised as a result of the loss of Eliduc's support: -

Mut ert grevez e damagiez  
E encumbrez e empeiriez;  
Tuz ses chasteus alot perdant  
E tute sa tere guastant.

Eliduc 553-56.

The fact of this indicates how crucially the success of such lord-vassal relationships depends on reciprocity, both lord and vassal equally needing the other. Hence both suffer as a result of a failure of this reciprocity: Eliduc unable to participate in any way in his rightful society, the King unable to assert effectively his natural rights of kingship; both, thus, suffer a degree of social non-fulfilment. As a result of his experiences during Eliduc's absence, the King comes fully to appreciate the extent of his dependence on Eliduc's vassallic services. This he makes clear in the terms of his request for Eliduc's return (Eliduc 565-70).

Unlike Arthur in Lanval, the King of Brittany also becomes fully aware of the extent to which he previously failed in his duty towards his good vassal: -

Mut s'esteit sovent repentiz  
Que il de lui esteit partiz;  
Mal conseil en aveit eü  
E malement l'aveit creü.

Eliduc 557-60.

Marie adds the detail of justice being done against the losengiers who were originally responsible for Eliduc's losing the King's favour and being cast into exile: this is precisely the fate imposed upon them once the King has come again to appreciate Eliduc: -

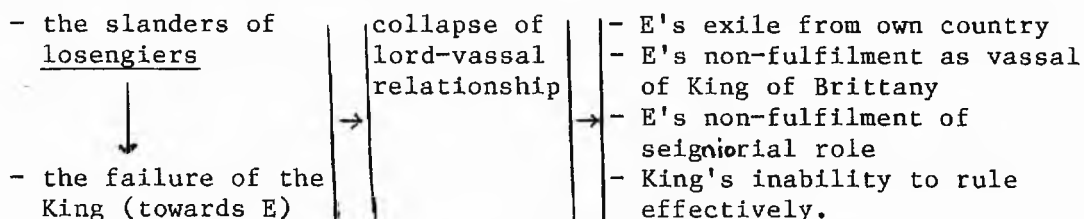
Les traïturs ki l'encuserent  
E empeirierent e medlerent  
Aveit jetez fors del païs

E en eissil a tuz jurs mis.

Eliduc 561-64.

This is a further example of Marie's evident love of cases of eye for an eye justice, instances of which are to be found throughout her lais.

We have seen in the previous chapter that Eliduc's period in exile is not in every sense one of social non-fulfilment. Yet, however actively he might participate in society in Exeter, his allegiance remains primarily to the King of Brittany, and he can never achieve completely satisfying social fulfilment while estranged from him. The causal relationship that exists between the different forms of social non-fulfilment as they affect in this case both lord and vassal can be traced as follows: -



In Chievrefoil also the exile of a vassal is a direct consequence of the breakdown of a lord-vassal relationship, occasioned by the anger of the lord against the vassal: -

Li reis Marks esteit curuciez,  
Vers Tristram sun nevu iriez;  
De sa tere le cuncea

Chievrefoil 11-13.

The cause behind the rift is in this case personal, and there is some justification for Mark's anger against Tristan, although this is not indicated in the text.

As with Eliduc faced with the will of his lord, so Tristan is clearly powerless against the authority of the King; forced into exile despite his own desire to remain in Mark's court. What is

interesting is the case of Tristan's experience of exile is the distinction that is made between the country to which he naturally belongs by the fact of his birth, South Wales, and the country to which he belongs by fact of social relationships, Cornwall, centred on Mark's court. Thus, we find the apparently contradiction of Tristan's being sent into exile to his native country: -

En sa cuntree en est alez,  
En Suhtwales u il fu nez.

Chievrefoil 15-16.

But it is as a vassal of King Mark that Tristan's social role is defined and it is, therefore, not in his own country far away from Mark's court that Tristan can properly achieve the degree of social fulfilment that should be his.

We also see from Tristan's experiences that the vital significance of exile is to be found less in the physical aspect than in the social aspect. Thus, although Tristan is shown returning to Cornwall, as a country, he remains isolated from society, both in the physical sense of living alone in the forest, and in the social sense of having no contact with the court to which he belongs: -

En la forest tuz suls se mist:  
Ne voleit pas qu'hum le veïst.

Chievrefoil 29-30.

The only people with whom Tristan has any contact are peasants, belonging to a social stratum very different from that to which Tristan himself belongs<sup>25</sup>, and in which he could never be integrated: -

Od païsanz, od povre gent,  
Perneit la nuit herbergement;

Chievrefoil 33-34 .

The image of the harsh conditions of Tristan's isolation from society appears in contrast to that of leisurely court life: -

A Tintagel deivent venir:  
Li reis i veolt sa curt tenir;  
A Pentecuste i serunt tuit,  
Mut i avra joie e deduit,

Chievrefoil 39-42.

This reinforces the impression of Tristan's deprivation, as does the reference at the end of the lai to his return to his own country in terms of enforced absences from Mark's court: -

Tristram en Wales s'en rala  
Tant que sis uncles le manda.

Chievrefoil 105-06.

This highlights the extent of Tristan's powerlessness; for the rift between him and Mark to be mended it would be necessary for Mark, the initiator of it, to take the initiative again, just as we have seen in the rift between Eliduc and the King of Brittany.

The experiences of social isolation and non-fulfilment endured by Haveloc have already been considered, with particular emphasis on the importance of the loss of family identity as generative of other forms of social non-fulfilment. Yet, here also the originating cause was in fact the breakdown of a lord-vassal relationship, occasioned by the extreme disloyalty of Odulf, who murders his lord, King Gunter and usurps his throne. It is thus that it is only by avenging this feudal betrayal that Haveloc is finally able to achieve fulfilment in society as king himself, having killed Odulf and reclaimed his rightful throne.

There is, in Haveloc, also the failure by Edelsi to fulfil his seigniorial obligations to Achebrit's people, whose care has been entrusted to him. In marrying Argentille to the scullion Cuaran/Haveloc, he is not only forcing her to renounce her throne, but is also depriving her people of their rightful queen claiming her crown for himself. This is a betrayal not only of the trust of

Achebrit, but also of the trust of his people.

Both Edelsi and Odulf are wholly deliberate in their disloyalty; there are none of the mitigating circumstances of forgetfulness or misjudgment such as we find in Eliduc and Lanval. Here, rather, both men seek to deprive others of their social position in society, motivated solely by their own ambitions for social advancement that is not merited.

Another character in the lais who consciously acts in defiance of the feudal bond is Equitan. He is very aware that his relationship with the seneschal's wife is contrary to his seigniorial obligations. He says to himself: -

'Garder li dei amur e fei  
Si cum jeo voil k'il face a mei.'  
Equitan 73-74.

This much he acknowledges immediately before making the decision to disregard these obligations. Equitan's betrayal of his seneschal is, thus, conscious and deliberate, although the seneschal only becomes aware of it and feels the impact of it at the very end of the lai. Equitan's failure towards his vassal goes further still, with his plan to murder him. This is the most heinous crime that a lord can commit against a vassal, a total negation of the bond that each has pledged to uphold. (The same applies in reverse, as in the case of Odulf's murder of his lord.) It is for this that Equitan deserves his own violent death, by exactly the method he had intended for the seneschal, in the tub of boiling water, another case of perfect justice, as Marie stresses: -

Tels purcace le mal d'autrui  
Dunt tuz li mals revert sur lui.  
Equitan 309-10.

In Graelent the collapse of the lord-vassal relationship occurs in a

way that is similar to circumstances in Lanval<sup>26</sup>. It is prompted by the intervention of the Queen, angered by Graellent's wholly justified rebuff of her advances. At this initial stage there is no suggestion of Graellent seeking to dishonour her, as there is in Lanval. There is no excuse whatever for the Queen's exploiting her position of social superiority to avenge such a personal grievance, as she does by turning the King against his loyal vassal: -

La roïne molt l'enhaï  
quant ele a lui del tot failli;  
a son segnor mal le metoit  
e volentiers en mesdisoit.

Graelent 137-40.

Au roi disoit e conseilloit  
ke nul rien ne li donast  
fors le conroi, qu'il n'en alast;

Graelent 148-50.

The responsibility for the breach between king and vassal is wholly in the hands of the Queen in her deliberate maliciousness against Graellent. The King is, nonetheless, also at fault. We note that no specific arguments by which the Queen convinces the King of Graellent's unworthiness are offered. Whatever they are it is certain that they are fabricated, and thus again we find a king guilty of a lack of judgment in doubting the proven integrity of a vassal in the face of slanders. Moreover the King gives Graellent no chance to defend himself. Instead of abiding by the feudal system of justice, the King exploits his position of royal authority in an abuse of his power by withholding the rewards that Graellent has already earned in his services: -

car li rois le faisoit atendre,  
ki li detenoit ses saudees;  
ne l'en avoit nules donees,

Graelent 144-46.

Graelent, like so many other vassals in the lais, appears, then, as the innocent victim of his lord's failure to appreciate him. As a result Graellent is reduced to penury, and, therefore, unable to

participate actively in the life of the court. This aspect of Graellent's loss of royal favour is particularly focused upon by the author of this lai: -

povre le tenist entor lui,  
qu'il ne peüst servir autrui.  
Que fera ore Graelens?  
N'est merveille s'il est dolens;  
ne li remest que engagier  
fors un ronci, nest gaires cier.  
Il ne puet de la vile aler,  
car il n'avait sor quoi monter.

Graelent 151-58.

The restrictions forced upon him by his situation are made obvious, so also is the dishonour caused by his poverty, as he is reduced to the demeaning position for a knight of borrowing a saddle from the daughter of his burgher host (Graelent 173-82).

It is with great unhappiness over his plight that Graellent rides out of the town alone, unable to find consolation in the court itself, this is the physical expression of his sense of social isolation: -

fors de la vile avoit un gart,  
une forest grant e plenièr,  
par mi couroit une rivièr.  
Cele part ala Graelens,  
trespensix, mornes et dolens.

Graelent 194-98.

The extent of the divergence from the norm of chivalric existence is highlighted by the reference to the season: -

Ce fu en mai, en ces lons jors,  
Graelent 160.

May is the month when traditionally in the literature of this time, the courtly knight is depicted enjoying the pleasures of life, birdsong in the woods, festivities at court. The implicit suggestions within this reference to May are in contrast to the reality of Graellent's unhappy solitude and social non-fulfilment. Graellent can in this detail be related to Lanval, as it is following the Whitsun festivities, at which Arthur made his distribution of

gifts, that Lanval also rode out of the town unhappily.

Although there is no specific indication that the rift between Graelent and the King is repaired, Graelent is, nonetheless, able to resume his life within court society as a result of his encounter with the fairy. There is, indeed, no further reference to Graelent's feudal relations with the King until the time of the Whitsun festivities a year later, when a second estrangement is brought about.

This occurs when Graelent does not take part in the ritual of declaring the Queen to be the most beautiful woman of all (Graelent 409-76). This is justified as he knows his own mistress to be more beautiful, it is nonetheless interpreted as a deliberate offence against the Queen's honour and as such a gesture of disrespect against the King. As in the earlier episode in Graelent the Queen intervenes in rousing the King's displeasure against Graelent; it is she who draws the King's attention to the fact of Graelent's non-participation in the ritual (Graelent 436-42) and who demands that he should prove his claims that he knows a woman more beautiful than her (Graelent 463-67).

On this occasion, in contrast to the earlier episode, the severance of relations between lord and vassal is public and official, the feudal judicial processes being set in motion to allow for the possibility of a reconciliation. Yet, when, at the end of the trial, Graelent is given every chance of finally achieving complete fulfilment within the social relationships of the court, he turns his back on the chance of fulfilment on such terms, for the sake of the possibility of love in the Other World. As with Lanval,



Graelent's departure from the Real World and his renunciation of any role within that world is a purely personal decision, and does not in itself represent a repudiation of the values of chivalric society.

Also similarly with the case of Lanval, we find in Graelent three separate instances of a severance of normal relations between king and vassal, each time in different circumstances; on the first two occasions it is the King who takes the initiative, on the first as an abuse of his feudal power, on the second in accordance with his seigniorial responsibilities; and on the last occasion it is Graelent who makes the definitive break. As with the other *lais* that have been considered, we see the extent to which there is an interaction between the different forms of social non-fulfilment; the failure of both the King and the queen to fulfil their obligation towards a good vassal leading to the inability of the vassal to fulfil his role in society; the sense of social isolation; felt by the vassal leading to his physical isolation; the collapse of the lord-vassal relationship causing Graelent not only to be unable to participate in the particular relationship, but also to be cut off from any normal activity in chivalric society in a wider sense.

Guingamor can be considered as part of the same tradition as Lanval and Graelent<sup>27</sup>. In Guingamor also the hero leaves the court society to which he has belonged in the Real World for an existence of absolute social non-fulfilment in the Other World. The circumstances that lead to this do not, however, involve in any way a rift between the young knight and his lord, their relationship is nonetheless forcibly brought to an end by the fact of Guingamor's departure. The source for the isolation from society suffered by Guingamor is to be found in the unjustifiably malicious intervention

of the Queen against her husband's vassal. This is motivated by her anger at being rebuffed by Guingamor but more particularly by her fear of the closeness of the relationship between the King and the young knight which might provide Guingamor with the opportunity of revealing to the King the truth of her misconduct: -

La roïne ert en grant effroi,  
molt fu dolent por le roi.  
Qant Guingamor a si parlé  
et de son estre tant mostré,  
pëor ot qu'il ne l'encusast,  
envers son oncle l'empirast.

Guingamor 121-26.

It is for this reason that she seeks to force Guingamor to leave the court. There is a degree of psychological subtlety in her means of achieving this end. Unlike the queens of Lanval and Graelent, she does not resort to blatant accusations against the young man, but refers to the hunt in such a way as to oblige Guingamor to undertake its perils for the sake of his honour: -

Guingamor a bien entendu  
qu'elle a por lui cest plet meü.

Guingamor 165-66.

The dangers implicit in the hunt of the white boar, that will take Guingamor away from the safe confines of civilised society, are stressed by the King: -

'la lande i est aventureuse  
et la rivièrè perilleuse.'

Guingamor 177-78.

There is, moreover, the risk that Guingamor embarking on it will never return to the court to which he belongs and where he is so well loved, as is also indicated by the King: -

'Molt grant dommage i ai eü,  
.X. chevaliers i ai perdu,  
toz les meillors de ceste terre  
que le senglier alerent querre.'

Guingamor 179-82.

We note the particular emphasis that the King puts on his own loss as a result of the disappearance of his knights, deprived of the

services of his best vassals. However strong the lord's position of authority might be, he is nonetheless dependent upon the support of his vassals for the maintenance of that authority. Thus the loss of the services of his vassal cause his own position in society to be undermined, as we saw to be the case with serious consequences in Eliduc.

Aware that the dangers of the quest are such that he might never return to his uncle's court, Guingamor is, nonetheless, insistent upon undertaking it. This is not in any way a voluntary relinquishment of his position in society, but, on the contrary, because he so values that position that he is seeking through the quest to build his reputation and to establish his merit by the standards of the court. The undertaking of the adventure represents, then, an upholding of the values of chivalric society. It is because of the obvious closeness of the relationship that Guingamor enjoys not only with the King but also with the rest of society that his departure appears all the more painfully as an enforced isolation from society. He rides off alone into the forest; this physical isolation presented in terms of a break with all human contact as not only the King and the people of the court but also all the people of the town accompany him to the edge of the forest (Guingamor 262-312). The emphasis on their not daring to enter the forest itself points to its inimical character: -

pres de la forest l'atendront,  
mes ja dedenz n'en enterront.

Guingamor 285-86.

defors le bois sont aresté,  
n'en lesse nul aler avant.

Guingamor 306-07.

The author handles this episode of Guingamor's departure with great skill to maximise the impression of Guingamor's solitude and his

isolation from society. This is achieved by contrasting the mass of people assembled outside the forest with the solitary figure of Guingamor distancing himself from them. First it is on the people that the author focuses: their fears for Guingamor's safety, their desire to retain contact with him as long as possible, and, perhaps above all, the solidarity existing between all of them, with apparently no distinction between social class. These aspects all emerge very clearly from the description of their remaining on the edge of the forest, listening intently for as long as there is any possibility of hearing his hunting horn, clinging as it were, to this last, intangible contact with him. What is most poignant is that it is evidently contact only one way: they hear him, but for him, who cannot hear them, the contact has already been broken. When there is no longer any hope for them of hearing him, they continue to attempt to support him with their prayers: -

Illeques sont demoré tant  
comme il porent le cor oïr  
et les chiens oïrent glatir;  
ariere sont tuit retorne,  
a Dieu du ciel l'ont commandé

Guingamor 308-12.

This gradual breaking off of contact creates the impression of Guingamor's disappearing into an unknowable blank. From the reference to the people returning, as a community, to the comforts of civilised society, the reader's attention is switched immediately to Guingamor, who has by this time penetrated deep into a very different world, beyond their ken. And Guingamor's progress takes him ever further away from the court to which he has belonged, and the people who care for him, as he pursues the boar from the Other World: -

Li senglers s'en va esloingnant

Guingamor 313.

Guingamor's attention is completely focused on the boar and the

King's hound, ahead of him, not behind him to the the people he has left, for it is only in so doing that he will be able to return to these people. Then he loses sight and sound of the boar and hound, leaving him totally isolated and separated even from his means to return to society (Guingamor 322-36). It is then, for the first time, that Guingamor's own unhappiness over his plight is referred to as opposed to that of others on his behalf: his fear has been less of the adventure itself than of not returning to the King. It is when it appears that his return will not be possible, that he despairs: -

Molt est dolenz, molt li desplest,  
l'espoisse erre de la forest,  
cuide q'ait le brachet perdu,  
onques mes si dolent ne fu  
por son oncle, qui tant l'ama.

Guingamor 325-29.

It is because of his awareness that what he has left behind is a positive and loving relationship with the King and that he has been fully integrated into court society, that Guingamor's experiences away from the society are fundamentally different from those of Lanval and Graelent. Throughout the lai, even when in the fairy's palace in the Other World, Guingamor retains his allegiance to society in the Real World. When Lanval and Graelent first ride out of the town, it is when there has already been a breach in social relationships. This is not the case for Guingamor. And when Lanval and Graelent leave the court again at the end of the lai, it is as a voluntary renunciation of their chances of social fulfilment. Guingamor, in contrast, never voluntarily renounces his hopes of a return to his society. Thus Guingamor's ever distancing himself from his society and from the Real World, in temporal as well as spatial terms, appears as a loss of fulfilment in a way that he feels very bitterly. This is expressed through the repeated

references to his desire to return to his home (Guingamor 346-53; 460-77; 533-37; 545-60). The desire for fulfilment in love never, apparently, overrides his desire for social fulfilment in the way that it does for Lanval and Graellent. These factors all reinforce the tragedy of Guingamor's discovery that he will never achieve this reintegration into society to which he has been aspiring throughout; this because, although he returns to the Real World, the civilisation he has known no longer exists.

It is, perhaps, in the final episode of the lai, that we can see most clearly the difference between Guingamor and the heroes of Lanval and Graelent in terms of their attitude to social fulfilment. All three at the end of the lai go to the Other World, but whereas Lanval and Graellent very positively take the initiative in departing from the Real World, Guingamor is carried away from it, almost dead, by the fairy's maidens (Guingamor 655-67). Although Guingamor's life is apparently saved, he is condemned to an existence of non-fulfilment by standards that have never lost their importance to him. Thus his final situation appears primarily as one of loss, in a way that is not the case for either Lanval and Graellent.

The circumstances that have led Guingamor to this final state of definitive social non-fulfilment are sequential, each taking him inexorably away from the position he initially enjoyed within the court; the initial step in the process being the Queen's proposition of Guingamor and her subsequent turning against him, through his departure from the court to undertake the quest, his encounter with the fairy, his visit to her palace in the Other World. Although there has been at no time a rift between Guingamor

and his lord, there is nonetheless a severance of their relations, the importance of which is stressed through each of these stages towards Guingamor's final situation.

Desiré also culminates in the permanent severance of relations between the hero and his King<sup>28</sup>, although there has been no specific rift in their lord-vassal relationship, which has throughout the lai been a close and loving one. Desiré's departure from the Real World is, nonetheless, a voluntary abdication of his role in the society of the court, as he rides away to an existence in the Other World with his fairy bride:

Desirez munte, si s'en va  
od s'amie ki l'en mena.  
Od li remeist en tel manere  
ke pus ne repeira arere;  
de returner n'ot il mes cure.

Desiré 757-61.

As with Lanval and Graellent, Desiré's departure in this way is a wholly personal decision based on a desire for fulfilment in love, rather than a repudiation of the values of society. Indeed, this is more particularly true in the case of Desiré, as before he leaves he marries his fairy mistress with the full blessing of the King and the Church.

The distinction between the young knights in Graelent and Lanval and Desiré in their relations with society appears more markedly in the earlier episode of Desiré's riding out of town prior to the encounter with the fairy. This is not in any way expressive of a dissatisfaction with society's treatment of him or of a sense of social isolation. It is rather in keeping with the tradition of well integrated courtly knights who, in springtime, like to spend some time appreciating the beauties of nature.

We see, then, that despite the obvious similarities between these lais - Lanval, Graelent, Guingamor and Desiré - there are interesting differences in the presentation of the hero's relationship with society in general and with the King in particular. In all four lais the hero moves from an initial position of living within a royal court in which he has been playing an active role, to a final situation of the hero's having departed from the Real World and definitively renounced any form of social fulfilment within that world. In all of them there is a narrative necessity for the hero to leave the court and to go into the wild in order for the initial encounter with the fairy to take place.

It is impossible to determine the exact relationship between the different lais, although it would seem likely, given the similarities, that the anonymous authors were acquainted with Marie's Lanval. It is also very probable that they knew another version, or versions, that were more primitive, hence the obvious dissimilarities between the stories. It is interesting to see how each of the authors confronted the problems of motivation in their characters.

The differences between the lais arise principally in the way that the hero is manoeuvred into the initial encounter with the fairy through physical isolation from the court society.

In Desiré, we see how it is possible for the author to bring this about with a minimum of explanation and without involving any rift between the hero and other members of society. In both Lanval and Graelent, it is the failure of the King towards the hero as loyal vassal that is the cause of the hero's riding out alone. In



Graelent and Guingamor, it is the intervention of the Queen that acts as a dynamo upon the hero, forcing him towards social isolation. In both of these two lais, the so-called Potiphar's wife episode is placed at the beginning of the story, exploited, albeit in different ways as an essential narrative device for motivating the hero in his initial departure from the court. As we have seen, there is a greater psychological subtlety in the way that the author of Guingamor handles this device. The use made of it by the author of Graelent as the basis of the rift between the King and vassal might appear more direct, it does, however, present problems in terms of the characterisation of the King. From a figure who blatantly abuses his feudal authority over Graelent at this point he is transformed into the exemplary monarch abiding by his seigniorial obligations in the second half of the lai.

Marie, in Lanval, manages to avoid such wide inconsistencies in her presentation of King Arthur. Certainly Arthur is at fault in his treatment of Lanval at the beginning of the lai, but this is not the deliberate ingratitude of the King in Graelent, in part justified as forgetfulness. This is not then the complete reversal in his character from this initial presentation to his behaviour later in the lai when he presides over the trial of Lanval. In not using the Potiphar's wife episode at the beginning of her story, Marie is able to use it as the basis of the later, more public breach in relations between the King and Lanval. In Graelent it is the ritual of the celebration of the beauty of the Queen that serves the same purpose. In this we find a similar pattern to that of the initial episode of the anger of the Queen against Graelent leading directly to the rift between the King and Graelent. In Lanval there is a greater dramatic contrast between the two episodes in terms of the

relationship between Lanval and both the King and the rest of court society.

There is no surviving evidence to indicate the order of events as presented in primitive versions that might have served as sources to the authors of the Old French *lais*. This makes it impossible to state categorically that it was Marie who moved the position of the Potiphar's wife episode from the beginning to the middle of the story. This would appear, however, to be the case, given that it appears at the beginning of both Graelent and Guingamor<sup>29</sup>. The alternative, that it was the author of Graelent who took this episode and placed it at the beginning, could be explained as an attempt to provide the King with a more tangible reason for his failure towards his vassal than mere forgetfulness.

Whatever the exact relationship between each of the four *lais* and between them and primitive versions, it remains that although the narrative in each case demands the physical isolation of the hero, there is no intrinsic need for a rift between the hero and his king, and that where there is such a rift it can appear more or less seriously as an indictment of the King in his failure as a monarch.

In many ways dissimilar to these *lais* is the Lai de l'Espine. It is, nonetheless, comparable with Guingamor in that here too the hero takes up a challenge that obliges him to leave the court society in which he has been well integrated in order to face a danger from which he might never return. In this case, however, the challenge is issued, without any sense of vindictive cunning against the hero, by the young girl who talks of the adventure of the Gué de l'Espine (Espine 189-94). There is no deliberate attempt to dispose of the

hero as there is in Guingamor, but the same emphasis in the dangers of the adventure, which the young hero is determined to confront for the sake of his knightly reputation in the court. These dangers are indicated first by the fears of the King (Espine 211) and more specifically by the knight from the Other World who warns of the consequences of defeat in the combat against him: -

'e se vous estiés malmis  
e ~~par mes~~ aventure ocis,  
vostre pris ariés vous perdu,  
ja ne seriés amenteü.  
Nus ne saroit vostre aventure,  
ains seroit a tous jors obscure;'  
Espine 409-14.

The young man's experience can thus be compared closely with that of Guingamor, leaving the court and venturing into unknown territory on the edges of the Other World, retaining throughout the desire to return to the court and the King, but with the danger of never being able to do so. The obvious difference is that whereas Guingamor can never return to the social fulfilment to which he aspires, the hero of Espine does return to a position of glory in the court.

#### 4. Non-Fulfilment of Marriage

There are two ways in which we can talk of non-fulfilment in marital terms. There are those cases in which there are obstacles preventing a socially desirable marriage from taking place. There are also cases in which the conditions within a marriage prevent it from being a success according to the expectations and demands of society.

In Deus Amanz, we find an example of the first type. It is clear that the King's daughter and her suitor are well matched for marriage. The obstacle that prevents them from achieving such

fulfilment is the excessive love that the King has for his daughter: -

Mes li reis ne la volt doner,  
Kar ne s'en poeit consirrer.

Deus Amanz 27-28.

Cumença sei a purpenser  
Cument s'en purrat delivrer,  
Que nuls sa fille ne quesist.

Deus Amanz 37-39.

It is because of his conscious and deliberate desire to prevent his daughter from marrying that he imposes a marriage trial that is humanly impossible (Deus Amanz 23-46). It is while attempting the test - the suitor carrying the young girl up the hill - that the couple die (Deus Amanz 213-38). Their love might transcend this death, but death inevitably and categorically puts an end to any hopes of achieving fulfilment in social terms. While some of the blame for the death of the lovers may be apportioned to the young suitor for his ultimate refusal to drink the potion (Deus Amanz 185-215), the true responsibility lies unequivocally in the hands of the King. In his negative attitude to the institution of marriage he has failed in his obligations as a father by preventing his daughter from achieving the social fulfilment that should rightfully be hers. He has failed also in his seigniorial obligations, by failing to provide his people with a secure succession. That the King's failure can be seen specifically in social terms is indicated by the criticisms levelled against him by society<sup>30</sup>: -

Plusur a mal li aturnerent,  
Li suen meisme le blamerent.

Deus Amanz 33-34.

Although Gurun, in Fresne, is never guilty of such a negative attitude to marriage as a social duty, he is, nonetheless, criticised by his people for his reluctance to marry, and this, as we have seen, very specifically with reference to his seigniorial

obligations in this regard. However, as soon as he is reminded of his duty to his vassals he accepts to marry.

Gurun's failure, unintentional and short-lived, is far less serious in feudal terms than is the deliberate attempts at avoidance of marriage by the young woman in Doon. That marriage is a feudal obligation for her as an heiress is made clear: -

Tuit li preudomme de la terre  
sovent l'en alerent requerre,  
seignor voloient qu'el preïst,  
mes el du tout les escondist.

Doon 25-28.

Her reluctance to marry appears, then, very specifically as a failure to fulfil her duty to her vassals. For her there is not the justification of loving a person she cannot marry, as there is for Gurun. The reason for her own reluctance is the inexcusable one of excessive pride: -

La pucele dont je vos di,  
por sa richesce s'orgueilli,  
toz desdaignoit ceus du país.  
N'en i ot nul de si haut pris  
qu'ele vousist amer ne prendre,  
ne de li fere a li entendre;  
ne se voloit metre en servage  
por achoison de mariage.

Doon 17-24.

Among her reasons against marriage is her unwillingness to accept the subservient position which would be her duty towards her husband. This unwillingness to fulfil the role of wife expected by society reveals a particular aversion to the nature of marriage as defined by medieval society. Such an attitude, rejecting the fundamental standards of society as applied to the institution of marriage is to be found expressed nowhere else in the *lais*.

It is in an attempt never to have to comply with the demands of society that she marry that she devises a marriage trial that is

almost impossible to complete. A suitor must first ride from Southampton to Edinburgh in a day (Doon 29-34). This is so difficult that, as she intends, many suitors fail in their attempts (Doon 38-44). Those who succeed in this are offered hospitality, but all of these mysteriously die in their beds overnight (Doon 45-64). This is also exactly as she intends, as it ensures that she does not have to marry any of them: -

E cele en ert durement lie  
por ce que d'eus estoit vengie  
Doon 63-64

The reader is clearly to feel no sympathy for this woman in her profound and socially unacceptable aversion to marriage. Even when a final suitor, Doon, does succeed in surviving both of these tests, she still refuses to marry him, setting him one further and apparently impossible test, that he should ride for a day keeping pace with the flight of a swan. She could nowhere hope to find a worthier man to be her husband, but her intrinsic aversion to marriage itself remains. Even in her final submission to marriage with Doon, there is an unwillingness; she is forced into it by her vassals: -

Cele nu pot avant mener,  
toz ses barons a fet mander.  
Par lor conseil a Doon pris,  
seignor l'a fet de son païs.  
Doon 157-60.

This indicates the extent to which she perceives marriage purely in terms of an unpleasant social obligation, with no sense of its being a form of personal fulfilment.

Ironically she is aptly punished for her negative attitude towards marriage, for three days into the marriage Doon leaves her. This is explicitly a punishment of her, as Doon explains to his son: -

'molt est orgueilleuse ta mere,  
par grant travail la porchaçai.  
Quant prise l'oi, si m'en tornaï,  
onques puis ne la regardai;'

Doon 264-67.

By this stage the lady has come to appreciate her marriage, and considers Doon's departure to be a betrayal: -

de remanoir merci li crie  
e bien li dit qu'il la traïe.

Doon 171-72.

With Doon's departure, the lady is deprived of the support that was the reason for such a marriage being considered desirable in social terms. Doon is abdicating his role of husband which includes the duty to actively defend his wife's rights with his knightly skills, acting as lord over her lands. Despite this he does not wholly fail to fulfil his obligations within the marriage. The crucial importance in social terms of procreation as a function of marriage has already been stressed. In this way at least, Doon has fulfilled his role as a husband, leaving his wife pregnant with the son who will grow up to be a worthy heir. In also leaving explicit instructions for the education of their son, Doon indicates the extent to which he takes his marital responsibilities seriously. This demonstrates that his walking out on his marriage is not a denial of the value of marriage in the same way that the lady's reluctance to marry most definitely was. Hence his willingness to reenter fully into his marriage many years later when it is clear that the lady has come to appreciate the significance of marriage and is prepared to accept her subservient role as a wife: -

El le reçut comme seignor

Doon 279.

Guigemar, after his return to his own country, faces a similar situation to Gurun in Fresne. He, too, is being pressed by his people to marry, and is reluctant to do so because of his love for a

woman whom he cannot marry, at least not immediately. Guigemar, however, acquiesces far less readily to these demands than he fulfil his social obligations. Like the lady in Doon, Guigemar imposes his own marriage trial; this is not, however, to ensure that he never has to marry, but to ensure that he need only accept one particular woman to be his wife, the woman he loves, as she is the only one who will be able to untie the knotted tunic: -

Femme voleient qu'il preisist,  
Mes il del tut les escundist:  
Ja ne prendra femme a nul jur,  
Ne pur avoir ne pur amar,  
S'ele peüst despleier  
Sa chemise sanz depescier.

Guigemar 645-50.

In imposing such a condition, Guigemar is, nonetheless, demonstrating that the fulfilment of his social duty will not take precedence for him over the possibility of achieving personal fulfilment in a love match. His is not the negative attitude to marriage in principle, of which the lady in Doon is guilty, but neither is it the socially laudable one of Gurun.

In Haveloc, it is, we have seen, Edelsi, who, with a fair degree of cunning, seeks to avoid giving in to the pressures of society concerning Argentille's marriage. To deflect the demands made upon him by his vassals, he contracts what appears to be the least desirable marriage possible for Argentille, to deprive her of her rights of queenship, and to force her to suffer extreme social displacement, as Edelsi sneeringly predicts: -

'De chalderes serra reïne.'

Haveloc 332.

The irony of this apparent mis-match is, as we have seen, that it is revealed in fact to be a highly desirable union, enabling both Argentille and Haveloc to achieve a degree of social fulfilment that



would otherwise be impossible.

Even marriages that are socially acceptable in terms of uniting a couple of socially equivalent status and that are in many ways stable and prosperous, can, nonetheless, be essentially flawed if they have failed to fulfil their primary role in the eyes of society in producing an heir.

This is the case with the marriage of Desiré's parents as it appears at the beginning of the lai; their childlessness presented as a very serious lack: -

De ce lur est menavenu  
k'ensemble n'unt enfant eü;  
a merveilles en sunt dolent  
e a Deu priënt mut sovent,  
par sa pité les confortast  
ke fiz ou file lur donast.

Desiré 19-24.

Clearly without a child and heir their marriage cannot be considered fulfilled. In this most self-consciously Christian of lais, the solution is sought through God. Not only do the couple pray to Him for a child, but in their desperation, they also go on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Giles (Desiré 24-48). It is as a result of this visit that the wife becomes pregnant. The fact of their naming the son Desiré demonstrates how greatly they had previously felt their lack: -

apeler le funt Desiré,  
pur ço que tant unt demoré  
kë il enfant n'urent eü,  
ore ad seint Gile fet vertu.

Desiré 55-58.

In Tydorel we find another such marriage, unfulfilled because of its childlessness. This is the marriage of the King and Queen of Brittany at the beginning of the lai. As with that of Desiré's parents, it appears happy and fulfilled in every other respect

(Tydorel 4-14), which highlights the misfortune of their having no child: -

Ensemble furent bien .X. anz  
qu'il ne porent avoir enfanz.

Tydorel 15-16.

The particular seriousness of this lack in social terms is due to the royal status of the couple, which imposes upon them a peculiar degree of responsibility to the rest of society. The unhappiness they have suffered in the failure of their marriage in this way is indicated by their great joy over the birth of the child Tydorel, who will be the heir to the throne (Tydorel 171-78).

In both of these lais, Desiré and Tydorel, the non-fulfilment of the marriages takes such a form that the couple themselves are in a way responsible for it. Both partners are equally desirous for the marriage to be wholly successful in a way that is not possible until a child is born.

In other cases, however, the failure of a marriage is very definitely attributable to the failure of one of the partners to fulfil his/her role within the marriage.

In Melion the fault lies completely with the wife, in her act of flagrant disloyalty towards her husband. It is in order to please her that Melion transforms into a werewolf, yet it is immediately he does so that she abandons him to a fate of extreme social isolation, depriving him of any means of being restored to human form. The situation is certainly an unusual one for any wife to confront, but the wife's behaviour is, nonetheless, totally contrary to that which society demands of her; and there is no attempt within the text itself at justifying her actions, which appear unequivocally as a

betrayal of her husband . This acts as some justification, certainly as an explanation, for Melion's wreaking havoc in Ireland to avenge himself against her. The responsibility for the irrevocable collapse of the marriage lies wholly with the wife, and the reader has complete sympathy for Melion in his bitterness against her and his refusal to take her back at the end of the lai: -

Sa feme en Yrlande laissa,  
a deables l'a commandee;  
jamais n'iert jor de li amee,  
por ce qu'ele l'ot si bailli  
con vos avés el conte oï;  
ne le volt il onques reprendre,  
ains le laissast ardoir u pendre.  
Melions dist: 'Ja ne faldra  
que de tot sa feme kerra,  
qu'en la fin ne soit malbaillis;  
ne doit pas croire tos ses dis.'

Melion 580-90.

The wife in Bisclavret is similarly guilty of betraying her husband, deliberately and heartlessly abandoning him to his fate as a werewolf. There is, however, some explanation offered for her unwifely behaviour: she is horrified to discover that her husband becomes a wolf for three days of the week: -

La dame oï cele merveille,  
De poür fu tute vermeille.  
De l'aventure s'esfrea.  
En maint endroit se purpensa  
Cum ele s'en puïst partir:  
Ne voleit mes lez lui gisir.

Bisclavret 97-102.

Marie may intend the reader to feel a degree of sympathy for the wife in her unwillingness to sleep with a werewolf. She does not, however, condone her behaviour, which is just as much a betrayal as that of Melion's wife (Bisclavret 125-26). The consequences of this abdication of her obligations as a wife have already been seen to be very extreme in terms of Bisclavret's experience of social isolation. In terms of the marriage itself, her act of betrayal causes it to collapse irreconcilably, especially as she goes further

even than the wife in Melion in denying her marriage and her obligations within that marriage, by bigamously marrying the knight who has helped her to dispose of Bisclavret (Bisclavret 133-34).

It is for such flagrant non-fulfilment of her role as a wife that she completely deserves the punishment that she receives at the end of the lai. For causing her husband to suffer such extremities of social isolation, she too is cast out of society (Bisclavret 305-14).

Equally guilty of the betrayal of her husband is the wife in Equitan. The matter of her adultery, her first disloyalty against him, will be considered subsequently, as although it has social implications its true significance is in terms of personal relationships. More serious is her plan to murder her husband, an utter negation of her duty to support and defend her husband. Her guilt in this is stressed, as it is she who is the initiator of the plot (Equitan 229-62): -

Hastivement purchacereit  
A sunsaignur que morz sereit.

Equitan 233-34.

Equitan is only her collaborator.

The reason for her hatching such a plot is her fear that Equitan will be forced into marrying some other woman. She is well aware that, as a king, it is his social duty to take a wife, and that in refusing to do so he is failing in his responsibilities to his people, arousing their just anger, as we have seen the anger of other vassals against their lord on the matter of marriage: -

Il ne voleit nule espuser;  
Ja n'en rovast oïr parler.  
La gent le tindrent mut a mal,  
Tant que la femme al seneschal  
L'oï suvent; mut li pesa

Equitan 199-203.

The seneschal's wife wants to kill the seneschal so as to be able to marry Equitan, although such a marriage could never be socially desirable because of the inequality of their social status, as she herself is very aware (Equitan 117-48). She knows, indeed, that a wife who could for him be considered suitable by the standards of society would be the daughter of a king, as she says to Equitan: -

'Femme prendrez, fille a un rei,'  
Equitan 215.

It is the degree of awareness that she has of social propriety that increases the extent of her fault in attempting to act in defiance of those socially defined standards and in urging Equitan to do so also. Her crime against the institution of marriage is, thus, not only in her failure of loyalty as a wife within her own marriage, but, with wider social consequences, in trying to prevent Equitan from making a socially acceptable match. Equitan is also at fault, both in refusing to acquiesce to the demands of his people that he marry and in contemplating a marriage to his seneschal's wife. Both represent a disregard for his social obligations as a king.

The marital misconduct of which the queens in Lanval, Graelent and Guingamor are guilty is more at the level of intention than actuality. The fact they are not able to enjoy the adulterous relationships with the young knights that they aspire to does not diminish the extent of their disloyalty against their husbands. The fact of their making amorous advances to the young men is sufficient to indicate their disregard for their obligations. The circumstances in each case are such that the Queen's fault is to be considered not only in personal terms, as any other marital infidelity, whether purely intentioned or consummated, but also more seriously still in social terms. This is because the young man who

is propositioned is the vassal of the Queen's husband. As we have seen, the implications of the lord-vassal relationship extend to impose a particular relationship between the vassal and the wife of the lord, based on mutual respect and honour. This is specifically referred to in each of these lais, as the basis for the vassal's rejection of such improper propositions. There can be little doubt that the Queen in each of the lais is fully aware of the significance of her advances as being in defiance of her obligations both as a wife and, more particularly, as a queen. That, in these cases, the betrayal of adultery itself does not take place is solely due to the fact that the young men propositioned still uphold the standards of social behaviour that the queens themselves have chosen to overlook. There is no indication that they feel any reservations about their behaviour, or subsequent remorse(Lanval 259-302; Graelent 19-128; Guingamor 70-126).

Only in Guingamor does the Queen come close to expressing any awareness of the extent of her transgression, this in her fear that her husband will discover what she has done (Guingamor 121-26). Even this cannot be interpreted as true regret over her actions, but simply the self-centred concern to conceal her guilt, and the consequence of this is, as we have seen, her decision to compel Guingamor to leave the court. The queens in the other two lais express not even this degree of concern over the impropriety of their actions. In their cases unrequited love is transformed directly into malice and their determination to cause a rift in the feudal relationship between their husbands and the loyal vassals.

We see equally from all three lais, how far-reaching the negative consequences can be of a deliberate failure to fulfil the

obligations implicit in marriage. For marriage as a social institution in a feudal society these obligations affect not only the two people who are married but also those with whom they are involved in social relationships. We have seen the extent to which Lanval, Graellent and Guingamor each suffers in terms of social isolation and non-fulfilment as a result of the Queen's failure to fulfil her own social responsibilities.

From the terms by which the heroes of these three *lais* reject the advances of the queens, it emerges clearly that although the nature of the relationships proposed by the queens is excessive, there is a degree of relationship that is socially acceptable and desirable. It is evidently considered normal by the standards of courtly society that a married woman should to some extent participate in social relationships, surely a reflection of twelfth-century reality. Married women would act as hostesses to their husband's guests, would be present to attend mass, would enjoy at the least the company of female relatives and friends, probably of men also, although undoubtedly in more restricted circumstances. It can certainly not have been the norm, at least not in the more sophisticated circles of the nobility, for married women to live a totally enclosed existence, isolated within her marriage from all contact with society, however innocent.

Yet, in Yonec, it is such a situation that we find, with the lady deprived of any contact whatever with anyone other than her husband, her husband's aged sister and a priest. She is immured by her husband in a tower, who has so circumscribed her existence because of his excessive possessiveness and fear of being cuckolded (Yonec 71-74). Such incarceration prevents the lady from even most

ordinary participation in social existence: -

Ne fors de cele tur n'eissi,  
Ne pur parent ne pur ami.

Yonec 39-40.

She is not even allowed to go out to church (Yonec 75-76). It is evident that the husband is extreme in his behaviour, and guilty of an abuse of his authority as a husband in forcing his wife into such an existence of social isolation. The wife is clearly justified in her recriminations against the conduct of her elderly husband: -

'En ceste tur sui en prisun,  
Jan'en istrai si par mort nun.  
Cist vielz gelus, de quei se crient,  
Que en si grant prisun me tient?  
Mut par est fous e esbaiz!  
Il crient tuz jurs estre trahiz!'

Yonec 69-74.

Equally justified are her complaints against her family who were responsible for arranging this excessively repressive marriage: -

'Maleeit seient mi parent  
E li autre communalment  
Ki a cest gelus me donerent  
E de sun cors me marierent!'

Yonec 81-84.

This is clearly an unnatural marriage in forcing upon the wife an existence of isolation from all aspects of social life. It certainly is very far from any ideal image of marriage, either as judged by the standards applied within the lai or as judged by the standards of society. The reader's attention is indeed drawn to the fact of it being a childless match: -

Unques entre eus n'eurent enfanz

Yonec 38.

The barrenness of this marriage appears in contrast to the fruitfulness of the relationship between Muldumarec and the lady. Specifically it has failed in its essential purpose, for it was for the sake of an heir that the marriage took place at all: -

Pur ceo k'il ot bon heritage,  
Femme prist pur enfanz aveir,



Ki après lui fuissent si heir.

Yonec 18-20.

Thus this marriage is a failure even by its own terms, based on the demands and expectations of society; it appears, then by such terms, as a total negation of what a marriage should be. The responsibility for the failure of this marriage in all ways lies with the husband in his excesses; the wife appears as an innocent victim, powerless against the authority of her husband.

From this case, we see that the plight of the mal-mariée, although particularly focused upon in the lais as a form of emotional repression and personal non-fulfilment, is also a form of social non-fulfilment, both in terms of the husband's failing to observe any desirable restraint in the fulfilment of his role within the marriage in denying the rights of his wife, and also in terms of the wife's being prevented from having any normal contact with society. As with the other situations considered in this chapter there is a direct causal relationship between the different forms of social non-fulfilment: the failure of the husband to fulfil his role in marriage adequately causing the social isolation of the wife.

Another such mal-mariée is the lady in Guigemar. She too is imprisoned by an elderly and excessively repressive husband: -

Gelus esteit a ~~dam~~ mesure,  
Kar ceo purporte la nature  
Ke tuit li vieil seient gelus -  
Mult het chascuns ke il seit cous - :  
Tels est d'eage le trespas!

Guigemar 213-17.

This explanation for the husband's fear of being cuckolded applies equally for the husband in Yonec: both are old men married to much younger women. Marie might offer their agedness as an explanation for their fears, but certainly not as a justification for their

behaviour towards their wives.

The lady in Guigemar is also incarcerated in a tower, this in a garden with a wall around it and beyond that the sea. The only exit is well guarded, so that she can never go out (Guigemar 255-60). She, too, then, is prevented from participating in any of the social activities that would be normal for the wife of a nobleman. Here, too, the fault is undeniably that of the husband in failing to acknowledge that marriage, as a social institution, involves both partners in some degree of participation in society.

Another mal-mariée, whose husband is excessively oppressive in his keeping her in enforced isolation from society, appears in Laustic.

Of her we are told: -

Kar la dame ert estreit gardee  
Laustic 49.

In Nabaret a similar point is made against oppressive husbands, albeit in a more humorous tone. The husband accuses his wife of being too concerned with her beauty, with the implication that she is attempting to attract other men. The wife retorts by accusing him of being a 'gelus' (Nabaret 40). The author's position seems to be the advocacy of a balance; the lady might be excessive in her pride: -

orgiluse ert a demesure.  
Nabaret 11

but the last laugh is against the husband for his demands upon her (Nabaret 43-45). What is particularly interesting in this brief anecdotal lai is the public rather than private way in which the couple deal with this dispute. It is the standards of the rest of society that are applied to for judging which of them is wrong within the marriage. When concerned about his wife's conduct, the

husband turns to his wife's family: -

de ses parenz plusurs manda;  
la pleinte lur mustra e dit,  
a sa femme parler les fit.

Nabaret 26-28.

The wife, in turn, addresses her criticisms against the husband to them also, and it is they who express the final opinion on the state of their marriage: -

Asez s'en ristrent e gaberent,  
en plusurs lius le recunterent  
pur le deduit de la parole.

Nabaret 43-45.

Thus we see that a marriage and the behaviour of the partners within a marriage is of general social concern to be judged by society rather than being a purely personal matter. Here, by those standards, both husband and wife are to some extent at fault.

##### 5. Love as a Cause of Social Non-Fulfilment

My intention at this stage is not to offer a detailed analysis of how different forms of love fulfilment/non-fulfilment interact with the social obligations of individuals. Such an analysis will more properly be dealt with in the following chapters. At this point, I want simply to indicate how love, or a preoccupation with love, can act in a way that prevents the individual from enjoying social fulfilment.

We see in Lanval, that the amorous advances made by the Queen to Lanval, as well as representing in themselves a denial of her own rightful social role, lead to the rift between Arthur and Lanval with serious consequences in terms of Lanval's position in the court society.

This is equally true of the queens in Guingamor and Graelent who allow their personal desire for fulfilment in love to transcend their social obligations, and who, once their love has been rebuffed, transform it into malice to cause the object of their desires to suffer social isolation.

In Lanval, Lanval's own love also comes to override his sense of obligation to society. When he leaves the Arthurian court at the end of the lai, having been acquitted at the trial, it is for the sake of love. At this stage he has the chance of being integrated fully into the life of the court, but his primary concern is now not with achieving fulfilment in social terms, but in an alternative way, through love. The shift to the fore of love as a priority for Lanval has taken place much earlier in the lai. When Lanval has been invited by the other knights to join them in the garden for the Feast of Saint John, he is in fact only slightly interested in participating in the courtly amusements, being more concerned with thoughts of his love for the fairy (Lanval 134-58): -

Lanval s'en vait a une part  
Luin des autres; ceo li est tart  
Que s'amie puisse tenir,  
Baisier, acoler e sentir;  
L'autrui joie prise petit,  
Si il nen ad le suen delit.

Lanval 253-58.

Thus, although at this stage Lanval is given every chance of being integrated in this refined and chivalric company - of which we are indeed told: -

Cil parlemenz n'iert pas vilains!

Lanval 252.

- it is his choice not to find enjoyment in such socialising.

The dominance that love has come to have over Lanval also manifests

itself in the nature of his unhappiness during the period preceding and during the trial. Lanval is less concerned about the rift between him and Arthur than about the loss of his mistress's love. It is this that make him feel that life is not worth living, and his chances of surviving this time depend less on his being offered a chance of being reintegrated into court society than on being offered the chance of happiness in love (Lanval 329-466).

Love affects Graellent in a similar way, as a force that turns his attention away from the fulfilment of his role in society. This is the case in the period prior to his trial, and, as with Lanval, appears most specifically in his leaving the court after the trial in pursuit of his mistress, the possibility of fulfilment in love having priority over the certainty of fulfilment in social terms.

Desiré also makes that final gesture of choosing love rather than society, leaving the Real World to go with the fairy to the Other World. This shift of allegiance has taken place earlier in the lai, as is evident from his grief when he has first lost the love of his mistress. This grief is such that Desiré falls grievously ill and withdraws completely from any involvement in the life of the court (Desiré 337-48). This period is marked also by Desiré's aversion to the Church, which he holds responsible for the loss of his mistress's love. This is because it was as a result of his confession to the hermit about his relationship with the fairy that she disappeared from him: -

durement maldit l'ermitage  
e l'ermite qu'il i trova

Desiré 332-33.

There crystallizes an opposition in Desiré's perception between the Church and its traditional teachings on morality and love, with love

assuming greater importance for Desiré. This opposition between love and the Church, in the person of the hermit, appears even at the very beginning of the lai, when Desiré is distracted from his intention as a devout Christian of visiting the hermit by the sight of the beautiful girl who leads him to the fairy and thereby to fulfilment in love (Desiré 125-220). Thus twice in the course of the lai we see that the attraction of love acts very specifically as a negative force preventing the hero from fulfilling his obligations towards the Church, as well as appearing as an anti-social force in the same way that it does in Lanval and Graelent.

In Guigemar the opposition between love and society is very explicit. We can trace Guigemar's development from a man exclusively concerned with fulfilment in social terms to one with an obsession about achieving fulfilment in love away from the society to which he belongs. This development corresponds exactly with his passage through the forest at the beginning of the lai. When he enters the forest it is as a socially integrated young knight in the company of other such men, interested only with the knightly pleasures of the hunt. It is as such that he pursues and shoots the white doe, but this encounter transforms him, as it is the doe which makes him aware of the need of love in his life, the arrow with which he shot the doe having rebounded to wound him also, a wound that can be cured only by a woman who loves him. It is with his awareness of his need to find fulfilment in love - as an abstract concept almost - that Guigemar makes the decision to leave behind him the courtly society of his own country. The decision is to a large extent forced upon him by the encounter with the doe, but it is, nonetheless, Guigemar who fully takes the initiative in voluntarily isolating himself from society (Guigemar 123-32). He

sends away his squire, a first gesture towards this self-isolation (Guigemar 133-36). He then rides through the forest, away from the town and people: -

Puis est muntez, d'iluec s'en part;  
K'esloïgne seït mult li est tart:  
Ne voelt ke nuls des suens i vienge  
Kil desturbast ne kil retienge.

Guigemar 141-44.

His passage away from civilisation is clearly indicated, as he moves through an increasingly desolate landscape of heathland and mountains as far as the sea<sup>31</sup>: -

Le travers del bois est alē  
Un vert chemin, ki l'ad menē  
Fors a la laundē; en la plaigne  
Vit la faleise e la muntaigne.  
D'une ewe ki desuz cureit  
Braz fu de mer, hafne i aveit.

Guigemar 145-50.

Although the land to which Guigemar travels is not the Other World, the details of this description and in particular his journey on the magical ship (Guigemar 151-208), might suggest that he is indeed leaving behind him the Real World. The journey certainly signifies a distancing from the social reality in which he has existed and achieved a considerable degree of fulfilment in social terms. It is only the character of the lady in the 'antive cité', who appears not as a supernatural being but as a mal-mariée and therefore very much a product of contemporary society, that indicates that Guigemar is still in the Real World.

Nonetheless, the period that he spends enjoying the love of the lady represents a total contrast with his previous existence in the society of his own country, physically isolated from his family, his relationships, his knightly activities. All of these forms of social fulfilment have lost any significance to him: -

Tut ad sun pa'is ublié.

Guigemar 382.

This loss of interest in forms of social fulfilment is due entirely to the dominance of love over him. This preoccupation with love as the most important aspect of his life continues after his return to his own country. This may be a physical re-integration among his own people, but he has little interest now in participating actively in this society, reluctant, as we have seen, to fulfil his social obligations, which include marriage (Guigemar 644-54).

Thus we see how the power of love can act upon an individual to transform him from one who is exemplary in the fulfilment of his social roles, to one who has little interest in such aspects of life.

We have seen that it is similarly because of love that Gurun, in Fresne, is recalcitrant in the fulfilment of his seigniorial duty to marry, although without allowing his love for Fresne to overrule his sense of social responsibility completely.

In that he appears in contrast to Equitan, who allows no sense of obligation to society in general or to his vassal in particular to restrain him in his passion for the seneschal's wife. The seneschal's wife is equally culpable in allowing herself to be dominated by a desire for fulfilment in a love that she knows to be contrary to the standards of society (Equitan 117-48). This awareness of the extent of their fault against society makes their pursuance of this love all the more reprehensible.

The anger that has caused Mark to cast Tristan into exile in Chievrefoil is roused by a similar lack of restraint with which



Tristan and the Queen have conducted their socially unacceptable love affair (Chievrefoil 11-14). Their love is anti-social by the same standards that can be applied against Equitan and the seneschal's wife, as it involves a betrayal of the feudal relationship between Tristan and his mistress's husband. Here, however, it is the vassal who betrays the lord. Mark's anger against Tristan can, thus, be justified by social terms. Marie's focus in this case is not on the social undesirability of the love as such, but rather on the consequences for the lovers of the social opposition to their relationship, with the reader's sympathy directed wholly towards them.

In the lais Cor and Mantel Caradoc and his mistress/wife find themselves to be outsiders in society in very different circumstances. What isolates them from the rest of society is, in both cases, that their love is pure and faithful, which sets them apart from the other members of the decadent Arthurian court. Their love is not in itself anti-social, indeed in other circumstances it would be exemplary, but in the context of such a corrupt court it nonetheless makes of them social misfits: it is not in such a society that they can ever be fully integrated, there being a crucial divergence between the standards upheld by them as individuals and those prevalent in the court.

In Espine, by contrast, it is the love itself that appears as an anti-social force, or at least love without restraint. Such is the character of the love between the young couple at the beginning of the lai, when they are so rapt in their enjoyment of each other's company and in their love for each other that they have no interest in participating in society. The extent to which this love has

acted as a negative force against the couple's seeking to achieve social fulfilment is indicated by the young man's decision to become a knight after his relationship with the girl has been brought to a halt. It is then that he admits his fault: -

'Trop ai gaitié la cheminee,  
s'en sai mout mains ferir d'espee.'  
Espine 147-48.

In this case, then, it is only when the young man has been deprived of any hope of fulfilment in love that he becomes aware of the extent to which he had neglected to fulfil his social role in society as the son of the king.

This is in contrast to Dané, in Narcisus, who is very conscious of the extent to which her quest for fulfilment in love is contrary to the norms of society. Not only does this desire for personal fulfilment lead her into physical isolation from society, as she goes into the woods to meet Narcisus, but it causes her also to repudiate the values of that society in a denial of her obligations as the daughter of a king. From her initial position of extreme self-consciousness about her social status, she has no illusions as to the implications in social terms of allowing herself to be ruled by her passion for Narcisus.

Eliduc is also very self-conscious in confronting his dilemma between choosing fulfilment in his love for Guilliadun or fulfilment of his social obligations to Guildeluec and the King of Exeter. He is well aware that his love for Guilliadun represents a failure of loyalty both as a husband and as a vassal of Guilliadun's father (Eliduc 304-26; 426-77): -

Mes ja ne li querra amur

Ki li aturt a deshonor,  
Tant pur sa femme garder fei,  
Tant pur ceo qu'il est od le rei.  
En grant peine fu Elidus.

Eliduc 473-77.

These are his scruples, comparable with the scruples expressed by Equitan immediately before entering into his relationship with the seneschal's wife. Eliduc similarly allows passion to override his sense of dutiful loyalty, at least to the degree of not sacrificing his love. We have seen in the previous chapter that Eliduc did not, however, allow this love to prevent him from fulfilling his vassalic obligations to his other lord, the King of Brittany. Yet, although he returns to Brittany and is active in the service of the King, Eliduc finds no pleasure in the fulfilment of his social duties (Eliduc 705-39): -

Unques pur rien que il veïst  
Joie ne bel semblant ne fist,  
Ne jamés joie nen avra  
De si que s'amie verra,

Eliduc 713-16.

This is an indication of the extent to which fulfilment in love has now taken precedence as a concern for Eliduc over the desire for fulfilment in social terms. It is, however, only later when Guilliadun is in her death-like trance and there seems no further chance of his achieving such fulfilment in love, that his preoccupation with love so totally dominates him that he ceases to participate at all in the life of society. Although living physically within society, at his home in Brittany, he isolates himself in an existence devoted to prayer and visits to the chapel where Guilliadun is lying (Eliduc 964-68). He refuses to be involved in even the most basic social intercourse, the loss of his love having caused him to become totally introverted, with thoughts of withdrawing completely from society into a monastery (Eliduc 947-50): -

Kar unques bel semblant ne fist  
Ne bone parole ne dist.  
Nuls ne l'osot mettre a reison.

Eliduc 961-63.

It is in a very different way that love is a negative force upon Guilliadun in this context. Whereas Eliduc, in his love for her, is very aware of his consequent failure to fulfil his social obligations, Guilliadun appears far more as a victim of her love for him in the consequences of social isolation that she suffers. It is true that it is voluntarily for the sake of her love for Eliduc that she leaves her own family and her own country (Eliduc 777-808), but she does this without knowing that the nature of their relationship is such that it cannot be integrated into society through marriage. Her departure from England is, therefore, not a gesture of renunciation of her role in society, but motivated rather by the expectation of fulfilling an alternative social role, no longer as the daughter of a king but as the wife of a knight. It is when she discovers that there can be no marriage to Eliduc, and therefore no role for her to play in Breton society, that she falls into her death-like trance, struck by the realisation of the extent of social isolation that awaits her as a result of leaving her own country for the sake of love (Eliduc 847-58). Such an extreme physical reaction to the discovery of the social consequences of her love indicates the depth of her horror; indeed, although to a large extent an innocent victim, the degree of social isolation that she suffers is as extreme as that of any other character in the *lais*. During the period of her trance she lies in a chapel separated from the town by a thick forest. Here she is left alone in the intervals between Eliduc's visits and without consciousness of them even. Her trance, as well as her physical isolation, cut her off from all contact with human society (Eliduc 868-978).

From Eliduc, we see how love can act in different ways as a socially negative force, causing both Eliduc and Guilliadun to become estranged from the fulfilment of their rightful role in society, she as the daughter of a king, he as a knight, vassal and husband. Yet, whereas she appears as the innocent victim of love, unawares of the sacrifice in social terms that it is imposing upon her, Eliduc wittingly repudiates his social obligations for the sake of fulfilment in a love affair which he knows to be unacceptable by the standards of society.

Melion and Bisclavret are also victims of their love, both enduring periods of extreme isolation from all contact with human society as an unintended consequence of a gesture of love. It is in order to please his wife by capturing the stag for her that Melion takes the drastic step of metamorphosing into a werewolf at all with the consequences we have seen (Melion 143-216). In Bisclavret, the gesture of love takes the form of the revelation of how the metamorphosis takes place, a revelation imposed upon Bisclavret by his wife's demands that he prove his love for her: -

'Nel me devez n'ient celer,  
Ne mei de nule rien duter:  
Ne semblereit pas amistié!'

Bisclavret 81-83.

Bisclavret's reluctance to tell his wife the truth is based on his fear of the possible consequences, a fear that is well justified, as it is this knowledge that enables the wife to force Bisclavret into his existence of solitude as a werewolf in the forest. For all his awareness of the dangers of such social isolation, Bisclavret appears, no less than Melion, as the victim of the emotional blackmail of his wife.

In neither case is the knight's love the direct cause of his isolation, but because of the circumstances it becomes a contributory factor.

In the Lai d'Amour love is set specifically in opposition to the fulfilment of social obligations. In the period that the knight spends enjoying his love relationship with the lady he is absent from his own country and his own people, and, therefore failing in his seigniorial responsibilities, as is indicated in a letter sent to him by his people which stresses their need for his return: -

De raler s'en nòveles vindrent  
Au haut homme... de loing;  
Par grant afere tel besoing  
Orent sa gent de lui mander  
Que li hanz hom contremander  
Ne puet pas l'erre sanz mesprendre.  
Amour 170-75.

This lapse by the knight from the fulfilment of his social role is, however, only temporary, and in no way represents an attempt to shirk or deny his duties in society, as immediately he is reminded of them he returns to his his own country, leaving his mistress behind.

It emerges from this study of the different forms of social non-fulfilment as presented in the lais that they do not exist in isolation, but always in some way or other in relationships of interaction. These, we have seen, are often causal relationships, thus the physical isolation of the individual from society will inevitably prevent him from fulfilling any of the roles that are integral aspects of his social identity. These remain, nonetheless, distinct aspects of social non-fulfilment as the failure by the individual to participate actively in society in his roles as knight, vassal, lord do not necessarily imply his absence from

society. Equally the pattern can be reversed, so that the individual's physical distancing of himself from society can be the result of his failure to find fulfilment in society. These are examples of the various forms of social non-fulfilment that can be combined in different ways. Although in each lai there is something of a different balance created through the balance of these various aspects, certain basic patterns recur. This is because of the crucial importance of certain particular social relationships, which serve to define the individual's role in society, as indicated in Chapter II. These relationships - familial, feudal and marital - are all essentially reciprocal, and the breakdown of these relationships is often caused by a lack of reciprocity between the partners. It is because of this essential reciprocity that the repercussions of the failure by an individual to fulfil one, or several of his social roles, almost invariably extend beyond his own experiences. Thus, we have seen that the failure of a lord to fulfil his obligations towards his vassal will, as a direct consequence, prevent the vassal, in turn, from participating in courtly society and from maintaining his natural lifestyle as a knight. In the same way the failure of a wife can have negative social consequences on the husband; the failure of a parent can impose restrictions upon the life in society of the child. The way in which the breakdown of these relationships is handled varies from lai to lai, in terms both of the circumstances that bring it about, and the consequences in terms of social non-fulfilment that derive from it, directly or indirectly.

For this reason the individual can be considered more or less responsible for his own social non-fulfilment. His culpability depends to a large extent on the degree to which he is aware of the

social consequences of his actions, or his failure to act. This culpability is obviously greater when his conduct leads to the social isolation of others, whether deliberately or inadvertently. It can, however, also occur that the individual suffers such social isolation and is prevented from fulfilling his social role as a result of circumstances over which he has no control, entirely as the victim of the faults of another.

External circumstances of fate also have their place in the ~~lais~~ socially isolating forces, primarily in the form of love or the supernatural in its various manifestations. Although a being from the Other World can never fully achieve fulfilment in the Real World, and indeed the Other World appears as being in opposition to the Real World, it must be remembered from the previous chapter that interaction between mortals and supernatural beings is not invariably negative in social terms. Such a qualification applies also to love, although it is evident that in many of the ~~lais~~ the desire of the individual for personal fulfilment appears in conflict with the demands that society impose upon him.

What emerges most emphatically from this consideration of the ~~lais~~ is that the individual is never shown to be entirely isolated from a social context. The failure of the individual to be fulfilled within society is presented as a deprivation, very rarely as an active repudiation of society itself or of its values. This is true even of those characters who choose ultimately to depart permanently from the Real World, renouncing their rights and obligations as social beings. The importance of feudal society, as the natural environment in which the character exists and develops to his full identity, appears, then, as clearly from this chapter as from the



previous one. This applies even to those lais which focus primarily upon the individual in terms of personal fulfilment; no individual existing solely in terms of his identity either as a social being or as a private being, the two aspects inexorably entwined, as we see to some extent from this chapter as will be seen with greater emphasis still in the following chapters.

Footnotes: Chapter Three

- 1 (p.156) M. Faure: 'Le Bisclavret de Marie de France, une histoire suspecte de loup-garou'.

Se dépouiller, - le mot revient à quatre reprises (vv69, 268, 275, 290) -, c'est abandonner le signe de cette appartenance, c'est ôter l'uniforme qui masque le corps réel, c'est abolir ce qui sépare l'homme du milieu naturel et sauvage. La nudité est donc la condition indispensable pour qui veut retourner à un état primitif, se rendre réceptif aux énergies naturelles, qu'elles viennent du Mal ou du Bien. p.348

- 2 (p.158) Kirby F. Smith: 'An Historical Study of the Werewolf in Literature'.  
see p.13. Marie's portrayal of Bisclavret as a good werewolf is exceptional in literature, the only two other such examples being in Melion and Histoire de Biclarel, both of which were, Smith maintains, influenced by Bisclavret.

Faure: 'Le Bisclavret de Marie de France, une histoire suspecte de loup-garou'.

see p.345.

- 3 (p.161) Jeanne Wathelet-Willem: 'Un Lai de Marie de France: Les Deux Amants'.

Marie n'est pas un écrivain impersonnel, qui reste en dehors de son récit; souvent elle s'exprime à la première personne. p.1152

Pierre Jonin: 'Le je de Marie de France dans les Lais'.  
see pp.193-95. The impersonality of Old French writers - they did not perceive of literature as a means of self-projection, and this includes Marie, despite her use of the pronoun 'je'.

La poésie médiévale, elle aussi, n'échappe que rarement à cette impersonnalité. p.193

About Marie: -

Elle raconte les autres sans jamais se raconter elle-même.  
Elle se veut insaisissable. p.195

It is inevitably impossible to assume views expressed in the lais to be the personal attitude of the authors as private individuals, and it is not our place to assert what Marie as a woman might have felt about her different characters. From the clues provided explicitly and implicitly in the texts, it is, however, surely justified to make assumptions about the attitudes of Marie as narrational voice, applying them to the context of the particular lai, and possibly, and more tentatively to her Lais as a whole.

- 4 (p.161) Oliver M. Johnston: 'Sources of the Lay of Yonec'.  
see pp.329-31. The motif of the birdman in Togail Bruidne Daderga.

Régine Colliot: 'Oiseaux Merveilleux dans Guillaume d'Angleterre et les Lais de Marie de France'.

see p.121. The theme of Yonec with its motif of the bird-man is common in both European and Indian literatures.

- 5 (p.162) Howard Rollin Patch: The Other World: According to Descriptions in Medieval Literature.

The Other World of the Celts was in any case located on this Earth, often in the West, and sometimes took the form of the Isles of the Blessed, the Land beneath the Waves, the hollow hill, or the land beyond the mist, or varying combinations of these. p.27

Patch takes care, nonetheless, to stress that similar notions of the Other World are to be found in other cultures, and that it is impossible to state categorically that the descriptions of the Other World in French Medieval literature are derived from Celtic sources.

The only positive comment to make is perhaps that Other World material was so widely scattered in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that it was hard for an author to escape it. p.276

Omer Jodogne: 'L'Autre Monde celtique dans la littérature française du XIIe siècle'.

see p.597. Jodogne believes that the portrayal of the Other World in twelfth and thirteenth century French literature is derived from Celtic and not from Classical sources.

- 6 (p.162) R.N. Illingworth: 'La Chronologie des Lais de Marie de France'.

see pp.469-70. Illingworth suggests that the description of Muldumarec's town is derived from the description of Carthage in Eneas.

- 7 (p.163) M.B. Ogle: 'The Orchard Scene in "Tydorel" and "Sir Gowther"'

the lay of Tydorel, certainly posterior to Marie's Yonec and influenced by it. pp.40-41

- 8 (p.165) Alexander Haggerty Krappe: 'The Celtic Provenance of the Lay of Tydorel'.

see p.201. Krappe identifies Tydorel as a tyrant similar to the demon-prince of Irish stories.

the tyrannical character of the demon-prince is still visible, in spite of all efforts of a 'courtois' poet to transform him into a model knight. p.201

- 9 (p.165) Tom Peete Cross: 'The Celtic Elements in the Lays of Lanval and Graelent'.

Early Celtic literature abounds in stories of supernatural women who visit the world of mortals in search of their chosen lovers. p.10

Lucy Allen Paton: Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance.

see pp.2-12. A consideration of the sources of the character of the fairy mistress and of her role within the narrative, as derived apparently from Celtic literature.

- 10 (p.170) Paton: Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance.

Despite the interlacing of the themes we may be reasonably sure that the fairy guardian and the fairy mistress are both derived from the original Celtic fairy mistress. p.195

Herman Braet: Deux lais féeriques bretons.

see p.66.

- 11 (p.170) Michèle Koubichkine: 'A Propos du Lai de Lanval'.  
see p.481. Lanval as a near anagram of Avalun.

Ainsi au terme d'un récit ascendant, en deux temps coupés d'une chute, Lanval est arrivé à son être véritable pour s'enfuir et se retrouver dans l'autre monde qui est le sien, avec celle qui lui avait promis d'en entrevoir les merveilles. p.481

Edgard Sienaert: Les Lais de Marie de France: du conte merveilleux à la nouvelle psychologique.

Although not expressly so, Sienaert seems close to Koubichkine's reading of Lanval's character and relationship with the Arthurian society of the Real World.

Dans le lai, l'écart se creuse entre Lanval et le milieu chevaleresque, dès le début, d'une façon continue et accélérée. Dans la même mesure, Lanval se rapproche d'Avalon et sa vraie nature émerge progressivement. p.99

Glyn S. Burgess: 'The Problem of Internal Chronology in the Lais of Marie de France'.

The name Lanval seems French, but was probably invented by Marie, possibly as an anagram of Avalun, a name she found in her source. p.144

- 12 (p.172) Paton: Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance.

see pp.177-78. This theme of the child raised in isolation from his family and in ignorance of his family identity is, Paton asserts, a traditional one.

- 13 (p.177) Judith Rice Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France: Themes and Variations, vol I.  
see p.83 note 85.

- 14 (p.178) R.W. Southern: Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages.

see pp.228-29. The link between monasteries and unmarried or widowed daughters of noble families.

They provided the children of noble families with a reasonably aristocratic life and with opportunities of great splendour. p.228

Founders and benefactors naturally wanted their children to have congenial companions and to live in surroundings that did not dishonour their parentage; and the monasteries on their side gloried in the nobility of their members. p.229

- 15 (p.178) Emanuel J. Mickel Jr.: 'Marie de France's Use of Irony as a Stylistic and Narrative Device'.

Mickel points to the irony of Fresne's name, the significance of which is specifically highlighted in the lai.

If Fresne is unable to bear fruit, it is because the mother's deed has left her 'nameless', robbed her of her noble identity, and unable, therefore, to become the king's wife. p.270

- 16 (p.179) Herman Braet: 'Tyolet/Perceval: The Father Quest'.

One will also have noticed the correspondence, operating like a mirror, between the hero's unfinished education and the desolate wilderness he has been growing up in, i.e. and environment which is the opposite of the civilised, courtly and chivalric community of man. p.300

- 17 (p.180) Mortimer J. Donovan: 'The Breton Lay: A Guide to Varieties'.

Pointing to the very obvious similarities between Tyolet and Perceval, Donovan concludes: -

Neither poem is derived from the other, both having a common twelfth century source. p.81

- 18 (p.180) Braet: 'Tyolet/Perceval: The Father Quest'.

It is its fairy nature, corresponding perhaps to the basic scheme of the legend, which confers unity on the poem, the fairy magic ensures the meaning of the tale as a whole. p.299

- 19 (p.181) Paula Clifford: 'Marie de France: Lais'.

We see that while pre-marital sexual relations may have been condoned in the society ~~of~~ which Marie writes, illegitimate births certainly are not. p.52

Robert B. Green: 'The Fusion of Magic and Realism in two Lays of Marie de France'.  
see p.330.

Given Marie's careful explanations of the circumstances forcing the lady to give up her child, Green is surely excessive in his condemnation of the lady.

- 20 (p.182) Ibid.  
see pp.332.

Raised as a stranger in a strange land, far from his parents, the son must find himself emotionally. Until this has been accomplished, he remains an outsider without a solid base for constructing his own life; he must discover the source of his being by establishing a reputation in the land of his birth. p.332

Thus the physical isolation of the North of England where he has been reared by his aunt is a reflection of estrangement from his true identity which is to be found in the same country as his parents. p.332

- 21 (p.185) Georges Duby: Guerriers et paysans: VIIe-XIIe siècle: Premier essor de l'économie européenne.

Scandale du nouveau riche qui n'est pas, comme le noble, désintéressé, ni généreux, ni couvert de dettes. p.287

- 22 (p.188) F.L. Ganshof: Feudalism  
see pp. 76-77.

W.T.H. Jackson: 'The Arthuricity of Marie de France'.

Jackson feels that Marie's portrayal of Arthur and of the Arthurian court must have owed something to an already existing tradition: -

The importance of this question for Lanval lies in the fact that Marie de France knows of Chrétien's concept of the court and relies on the fact that her audience understands. Lanval has no point at all unless those who heard it knew of the petulant, weak Arthur, the Guenevere who betrayed him with Lancelot, the Gauvain who was courteous above other knights, and the obsession of the court with leisure pursuits. Either Marie must have known Chrétien or she must have known some predecessor who treated the Arthurian court in the same way. The other possibility is, of course, that she arrived independently at the same ironical view of the court as that reached by Chrétien. Such a solution is possible, but unlikely, since the audience, too, must be aware of Arthur, roi-fainéant, if it is to understand the lai. p.3

Erich Köhler: L'Aventure Chevaleresque: Idéal et réalité dans le roman courtois.

see pp.38-39. This presentation of Arthur as a weak, unjust king corresponds with a general trend in contemporary literature and relates to the image of Charlemagne as a similarly unimpressive figure in the chansons de geste. Köhler maintains that this is part of a reaction of self-defence on the part of the class of the nobility - the intended audience for such literature - as an attempt to escape the reality of a reinvigorated monarchy which was just as much a threat to their status and political power as the growth of the bourgeoisie.

- 23 (p.189) Jackson: 'The Arthuricity of Marie de France'.

We are faced with the unmentionable - the Arthurian knight who is poor and who is poor because of the failure of Arthur to do what the literary convention demands, p.6

24 (p.190) Ibid.

In Lanval the hero leaves the court not to seek adventure but because the court has nothing to offer him. p.6

Lanval's plight is thus highlighted by contrast with the norm in Arthurian tales.

F. Xavier Baron: The Alienated Hero in Arthurian Romance. see Chapter IV.

Baron accurately describes Lanval at this stage as being: -

pre-eminently the lonely, isolated hero. p.167

He fails, however, to appreciate that there is through the course of the lai a development, both in Lanval's stance towards society and the way in which the court of King Arthur behaves towards him, as is indicated by Baron's summing up of the lai as a whole: -

We have a full and brilliant study of the alienated hero in opposition to a corrupt and debased Arthurian court. p.167

25 (p.198) Roger Dubuis: 'Plaidoyer pour une lecture globale du lai du Chèvrefeuille'. see p. 356.

Tristan vit dans la forêt une vie de proscrit, d'homme traqué. Lui, le neveu du roi, le noble seigneur est condamné à fuir tout contact avec l'entourage du roi où l'attendent la haine des jaloux et la lâcheté des faibles et à ne pouvoir faire confiance qu'à ceux que leur condition sociale rend le plus étranger à son milieu naturel. p.356

26 (p.201) The nature of the relationship between the two lais is considered in a number of studies: -

William Henry Schofield: 'The lays of Graelent and Lanval and the Story of Wayland'.

The lay of Graelent tells practically the same story as Marie's Lanval, and the two are unquestionably but different versions of the same theme, borrowing independently from related sources. p.129

Lucien Foulet: 'Marie de France et les lais bretons'. see pp.19-28. Foulet feels that the greatest debt of the author of Graelent is directly to Marie.

En présence d'un cas d'imitation aussi délibérée et aussi consciente, ce serait se faire illusion que de rechercher au lai, par delà ses modèles français, de prétendues origines celtiques. p.28

William C. Stokoe Jr.: 'The Sources of Sir Launfal : Lanval and Graelent'.

see pp. 402-04. Stokoe believes Graelent to be closer to a primitive version in its narrative order than Lanval is, suggesting that Lanval is adapted from a version of Graelent, although not necessarily the version that we know. He categorically dismisses the possibility that the version we know of Graelent is based solely on Lanval, being different from it in so many ways.

R.N. Illingworth: 'The Composition of Graelent and Guingamor' see p.31. Illingworth sees both Guingamor and Graelent as later works than Marie's Lanval and owing some debt to Lanval, but also with a direct debt to Celtic tradition.

It is only by exposing the Celtic traditions in GR and GN which are independent of Marie that one can obtain a real understanding of the manner in which they were composed and of their relationship to Marie's lais and to each other. p.31

Herman Braet: Deux Lais féeriques bretons.

Braet considers the relationship between Lanval and Graelent: -

Les deux poèmes seraient des rajeunissements d'une version primitive perdue. Marie aurait Arthurisé sa version et l'aurait rendue plus courtoise; l'auteur de Graelent se serait inspiré de son texte, tout en nous conservant une version plus archaïque, plus fruste, mais plus fidèle au conte ancien. p.50

- 27 (p.204) There appear considerations of the possible relationship between Guingamor, Graelent and Lanval in the following studies: -

Illingworth: 'The Composition of Graelent and Guingamor'. see p.41. Illingworth feels Guingamor to have been composed after Graelent and to have been influenced by it.

Prudence Mary O'Hara Tobin: 'L'Elément breton et les lais anonymes'. see pp.277-78.

- 28 (p.210) Ibid. p.278.

Desiré présente une version plus courtoise et plus française de la tradition, p.278.

- 29 (p.213) Ibid. p.277.

Les lais anonymes sont restés plus près des vieilles légendes celtiques, plus simples, sans but psychologique ou moral. Ils contiennent des restes de mythes celtiques qui manquent de cohérence. Comme Marie, les auteurs anonymes les ont adaptés à leurs propres idées, en les dotant d'un caractère chevaleresque, courtoise et, dans certains cas, chrétien (tel Desiré, par exemple). p.277



- 30 (p.215) Angela M. Lucas: Women in the Middle Ages: Religion, Marriage and Letters.

Parental power did not always work to the disadvantage of the female sex. If a girl's father was at all backward about finding her a husband, she could demand that he made better speed in the matter. p.67

- 31 (p.234) Ernest Hoepffner: 'Pour la chronologie des Lais de Marie de France'.  
see p.63. Hoepffner suggests that Marie has taken the details of her description of Guigemar's passage to the coast from one in Eneas. He criticises her for combining these in an incoherent way and of offering a description that has no integral role within the lai as a whole: -

Ce sont exactement les mêmes éléments que nous retrouvons chez Marie: la falaise, la plaine, la montagne, le cours d'eau. Il semble bien que Marie, frappée par cette description du roman antique, ait voulu faire quelque chose d'analogue. Elle a repris les principaux éléments du tableau, mais elle n'a réussi qu'à présenter une vue assez confuse d'un paysage qui est d'ailleurs sans aucune importance pour la suite du récit. p.63

Somewhat surprisingly, he makes no reference to there being a concordance between the elements of this description and descriptions of the Other World prevalent in contemporary literature and, apparently, derived from Celtic imagery.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: FORMS OF PERSONAL FULFILMENT

The distinction between personal fulfilment and social fulfilment is not rigidly definable. Often it is simultaneously, in the same forms of activity and existence, that an individual achieves both forms of fulfilment. Thus, the relationship between the individual and his/her parents which has been considered in terms of its social relevance, is also a form of personal fulfilment. Marriage also in some of the *lais* appears as a form of personal fulfilment - a love match - as well as being a social institution.

There is, however, not always such coincidence between the fulfilment of the demands and expectations of society and the fulfilment of the individual's personal desire for happiness. The form of personal fulfilment which is most commonly featured in the *lais*, and which is treated in greatest depth, is the heterosexual love relationship. In many of the texts, indeed, it is this relationship which is central to the narrative of the *lai*, providing the story with, as it were, its raison d'être. The nature of the love aspired to and/or enjoyed by the characters in the different *lais* varies, indicating variations in the perception of ideal love as fostered by the different authors. There are also, we shall see, differences in the nature of the relationship in which this love finds expression.

##### 1. Family Relationship

A closeness between an individual and his/her family, in particular with his/her parents, is an important factor in defining the individual's social identity and, in consequence, the role that is

naturally to be fulfilled in society, as a right and a duty. Alongside this aspect of social responsibility, which is a fundamental bonding element in such parent-child relationships, there is often, as importantly a bond of affection, which makes this relationship as significant as a form of personal fulfilment as it is as a form of social fulfilment.

This is obvious in the case of the relationship between the King and his daughter in Deus Amanz. There can be no doubt as to the emotional dimensions in this relationship; we are told of the King's feelings for his daughter: -

Forment l'amot e chierisseit

Deus Amanz 24

This love is clearly reciprocated, the daughter being unwilling to upset her father, even for the sake of happiness in her relationship with the young man. Thus her devotion to her father is expressed in her refusal to elope with her lover; she says: -

'Si jo m'en vois ensemble od vus,  
Mis pere avreite doel e ire,  
Ne vivreit mie sanz martire.  
Certes tant l'eime si l'ai chier,  
Jeo nel vodreie curucier.'

Deus Amanz 96-100

The daughter appears as the ideal daughter in her loyalty and commitment to this bond between her and her father<sup>1</sup>. There is, however, the suggestion that the father's love goes beyond that level of reciprocity which is desirable in such a relationship<sup>2</sup>. Even before the story develops to show the drastic consequences of the King's reluctance to allow his daughter to find fulfilment in other personal relationships as in her marriage, there is the indication that his love might be other than properly paternal, although there is no explicit reference to incest: -

Li reis n'aveit autre retur,  
Pres de li esteit nuit e jur.

Confortez fu par la meschine,  
Puis que perdue ot la reine.

Deus Amanz 29-32.

This is, then, a flawed model of the perfect parent-child relationship, flawed because it is lacking in moderation.

In Espine, by contrast, although the relationship between the King and his son, the young knight, is clearly a loving one, there is no hint of excessive possessiveness on the part of the father to spoil it. Both the fatherly love and the fact of suitable moderation in that love are to be seen in the King's response to his son's decision to face the dangers of the Gué de l'Espine. Fearful for the safety of the son, he is reluctant for him but does not stand in the way of his going (Espine 209-11). His feelings for the boy are evident also from the pride and joy with which he welcomes the return of the boy, who has proved himself a worthy son (Espine 475-76).

In a number of the lais, fulfilment of the parent-child relationship is achieved fully only at the conclusion of the story, an integral factor in the individual's fulfilling her/her destiny.

This is the case in Fresne with the emotional reunion between Fresne and her parents. Although the focus is primarily on the mother-daughter relationship, this reunion has a particular significance for the father also, as he has not even been aware of the existence of this child of his; and his happiness is indicated as specifically as that of the mother: -

Li sires dit: 'De ceo sui liez!  
Unques mes ne fu si haitiez,  
Quant nostre fille avum trovee!  
Grant joie nus ad Deus donee,'

Fresne 485-88.

Here the establishment of a normal loving relationship between the parents and the daughter is an essential part of the narrative, in particular for its consequences beyond itself but without this undermining its intrinsic importance as indicated by Marie's stress on the emotional dimension of it.

This is true equally in Milun, where part of the importance of the reunion of father and son is that it enables the reunion of the parents also. Here too the emotional dimension to the parent-child relationship in itself is also explicit, first in the reunion of father (Milun) and son: -

De joie e de pitié plurouent.  
Milun 480.

Asez eurent joie e deduit  
Milun 486

then in the reunion of mother and son: -

Mut par fu liee de sun fiz  
Milun 523.

There is equally such joy and love in the reunion of Doon and his son Doon 242-66): -

Baisié se sont e acolé,  
merveilleuse joie menerent,  
Doon 272-73.

In both cases, Milun and Doon, the consequences of the parent-child reunion extend beyond it, to allow for the crystallization of the family bond, linking mother, father and child in the essential triangular relationship, providing each with much happiness (Milun 529-30; Doon 279-85). Another crucial aspect of this reunion, common to both Milun and Doon, is in the circumstances in which it took place. In both lais, it is in seeking to build a reputation in society by demonstrating their chivalric skills that the sons are reunited with their fathers, having proven themselves worthy of such

parentage. There is a perfect coincidence of social and personal fulfilment.

In Desiré also there is an emotional reunion between father and son after a lengthy separation. This comes about when the son is sent by his mother, the fairy mistress, specifically to meet his father and to meet his father's family (Desiré 441-97). This is of social significance, but it is also of emotional significance to Desiré, whose paternal love is made clear: -

Desirez l'aime e tent si cher,  
ne pot ne nuit ne jor leisser.

Desiré 47-78.

This period of felicity in the relationship between Desiré and his son is, however, shortlived. Just as the son has, at his mother's instigation, taken the initiative in coming to his father, so he takes the initiative in returning to his mother.

In Tyolet, it is the mother-son relationship that appears as significant, the mother being wholly responsible for the son's upbringing after the death of Tyolet's father. This is a particularly close relationship, unavoidably so in the circumstances of their isolation from almost all other human contact (Tyolet 37-80). The mother's love for her son is explicitly referred to: -

car sa mere l'ot molt amé.

Tyolet 64.

forment l'ama,

Tyolet 76.

Her maternal love appears also from her conduct towards her son which is comparable to that of the King in Espine towards his son, as a balance of protectiveness and moderation. She has sheltered her son from the dangers of a chivalric existence, but once he expresses a desire to take up such a life she in no way seeks to

prevent him from doing so. Unlike the father in Deus Amanz she makes no attempt to retain him within the enclosure of the parent-child relationship in an unnatural way; indeed, she provides him with the basic means for building his own life beyond their relationship, giving him the arms and the advice which will enable him to achieve fulfilment as a knight in the Arthurian court (Tyolet 249-76). The encouragement that she gives him to leave her is not in any sense a denial of her love, as her last gesture towards him evidences: -

Atant s'en est de li torné,  
el l'a baisié e acolé.

Tyolet 275-76.

It is clear, therefore, that in her love for Tyolet she is an ideal mother, supportive of her son, without ultimately preventing him from achieving other forms of fulfilment. This is particularly important within the terms of the lai, which places much stress on Tyolet's maturing into a man, achieving fulfilment in social terms through his prowess and developing relationships with the King and the Arthurian court and also through marriage with the haughty princess. After Tyolet's departure from the forest there is no further reference to his mother, but because of her conduct towards him at the beginning of the lai there is not a complete opposition between his relationship with her and his subsequent existence. She has provided the background from which he is able to develop towards the ultimately achieved complete fulfilment of his identity. This is the natural development for a parent-child relationship, to allow itself to be superseded by other relationships, and thus appears as the ideal model.

This aspect of familial relationships is of significance in Guigemar also. At the beginning of the lai, Guigemar is extremely close to

his parents: -

A merveille l'amot sa mere  
E mult esteit bien de sun pere.

Guigemar 39-40.

Even after he has grown up, trained and proved himself as a knight he returns to his family and the unaltered loving relationship with them: -

En la flur de sun meillur pris  
S'en vait li ber en sun pais  
Veeir sun pere e sun seignur,  
Sa bone mere e sa sorur,  
Ki mult l'aveient desiré.

Guigemar 69-73.

It is precisely at this stage in his career that Guigemar's ambitions should be turning towards achieving greater social success and also towards other forms of personal fulfilment. Although urged to develop an interest in love relationships with women, Guigemar feels no interest in this form of love (Guigemar 57-68). This, it would appear, is because he finds too great a degree of personal fulfilment within his relationship with his family<sup>3</sup>. Such exclusive commitment to this particular relationship is clearly excessive, as judged by friends and strangers, and by the author herself, although Guigemar fails to appreciate the degree of his own fault. It is only the force of circumstances that propels Guigemar beyond the confines of this familial relationship to a development of himself as a man involved in other relationships. It is then that the family relationship comes to take a more natural and desirable form, as the basis of his existence, not the whole of his emotional life. This is reflected through the text, as much less reference is made to Guigemar's family after he has discovered love.

In Guingamor the familial relationship is between uncle and nephew. The particular strength of the affective bond between them is indicated through the King's feelings for his nephew, Guingamor: -



Por sa valor, por sa biauté  
li rois le tint en grant chierté;  
de lui voloit fere son oir,  
car ne pooit enfant avoir.

Guingamor 13-16.

He is willing to grant any request his nephew may make of him (Guingamor 195-99), but is very unhappy when he discovers that Guingamor's request is to undertake the hunt of the white boar (Guingamor 207-44). The King's love is very clearly expressed in his fears for Guingamor's safety, his reluctance to let him go. Yet his love is not selfish, for he does give way to his nephew's insistence that he should have this chance to prove his worth. Again, as in Espine and Tyolet, familial love does not stand in the way of social fulfilment for the individual.

Also stressed in Guingamor is the reciprocity of the love between uncle and nephew. Guingamor values this relationship as much as the King does. Throughout the period he spends away from his uncle's court, Guingamor remains much concerned with returning to the court with the proof that he is worthy of his uncle's love. It is for this reason that Guingamor is very upset when he loses sight of the hound that his uncle has given him for the hunt: -

cuide q 'ait le brachet perdu,  
onques mes si dolent ne fu  
por son oncle, qui tant l'ama.

Guingamor 327-29.

The devotion to his uncle remains unwavering even after Guingamor has discovered other forms of love through the encounter with the fairy. In its particular focus upon the strength of feeling in a family relationship, Guingamor is unusual among the *lais*. It demonstrates that an extremely deep emotional bond can exist in a familial relationship, one to which both partners are equally committed, without its standing as an obstruction to the development

of other relationships or to the achievement of fulfilment in social terms.

From these different lais, we can derive some idea of the ideal format of a close familial relationship, based on a deep affective bond, from which pleasure is derived by all involved. As with all other relationships it requires commitment and reciprocity, each to provide support to the other. What is distinctive about it is the particular necessity for moderation within it, to prevent it from ever becoming an exclusive relationship. Ideally the purpose of the relationship between parent and child (uncle and nephew) is to serve as a basis of emotional as well as social security from which the child can develop into other forms of social and personal fulfilment.

It must be noted that in some lais, however, the parent-child relationship appears purely in social terms, endowed with no significance whatever as a form of personal fulfilment. This is the case in Vair Palefroi in the relationship between the young girl and her wealthy and socially ambitious father, who sees his daughter as only a pawn in his machinations. There is equally no suggestion of love between the Queen and her daughter in Espine.

## 2. Marriage as a Form of Personal Fulfilment

Marriage appears in a way as similar to the family, as a bond between people that can be endowed with both personal and social significance, as a fusion of the demands of society and the personal desires of the individuals involved. Such a fusion is what we find ideally in marriage in the lais. Although a number of marriages are portrayed in the lais purely in social terms - in particular those

that have been arranged as a social duty - for a majority the emphasis is on their representing the happy culmination of a love relationship.

This is the case for the marriage between Fresne and Gurun. The extent to which this is a suitable match in the eyes of society is clearly indicated in the text (see Chapter II), but it is primarily the consummation of love, allowing the couple to enjoy complete personal fulfilment<sup>4</sup>. More than many couples in the lais, Fresne and Gurun have enjoyed a considerable amount of freedom in the development of their love relationship, but it is only through marriage that the relationship can become permanent and secure, freed from the threat of being disrupted by the pressures of society. This is one of the crucial aspects of marriage that distinguishes it from all other heterosexual love relationships: it alone is condoned by society, existing as an integration of social fulfilment and personal fulfilment. It is only in marriage that such a reconciliation of the two aspects of an individual's existence can be effected.

In the Lai de l'Espine, the marriage of the young couple at the end of the lai is similarly the acknowledgement by society of the suitability and desirability of their love. Although the marriage is finally condoned by society, its significance in the lai lies above all as a love match, allowing the couple to be united permanently in their love for each other, a love which has existed as a deep bond between them since the beginning of the lai but which has been restricted by the opposition of society. Marriage brings no change in the intensity of the love between the young couple, but it is only through marriage that total fulfilment in it can be

achieved. The marriage is made possible because the young man has proven his worth as a knight and earned a reputation in society; it is only then that society allows him to seek personal fulfilment also (Espine 475-508). The adventure at the Qué de l'Espine acquires the value of a rite of passage in which the young knight is tested. In succeeding in the combat against the knights from the Other World, he asserts his adulthood; he is very far from being the ineffectual boy of the beginning of the lai, when he was only interested in love. The importance of the adventure is indicated by the author himself in the choice of title for the lai: -

Ne l'ont pas des enfans nomé,  
ains l'ont de l'Espine apielé,  
Espine 509-10.

It is as a man, unafraid to assert himself in the world and even to risk his life in the pursuit of knightly glory, and not as a boy that society can respect him. Marriage appears, then, as a reward granted to him by society in recognition of him as a whole man, a social and private being. Because of his having achieved a balance in himself, so the marriage he enters into appears also as the perfect balance of social institution and love match.

The marriage of Desiré and his mistress is presented also as the recognition by society of the rights of the lovers to be united permanently. This is emphasised by the participation of the King in the ceremony. Blessed in the eyes of society, the importance of the marriage for the couple and within the context of the lai is, nonetheless as the final consummation of a love relationship, that has hitherto had a chance only of partial fulfilment, while illicit and secret. The marriage reveals both to each other and openly to society the extent of their commitment to their love. As in Espine marriage appears as a reward to the hero for his having fully

embraced the responsibilities that are a part of maturity. Here, however, his maturity is measured less in terms of his success in society than by the terms of love: in coming to appreciate the true value of love, Desiré has earned the right to unrestricted happiness in his relationship with the fairy, possible only through marriage. That the marriage is to be seen more as a celebration of love than as a social institution is made manifest by the departure of the couple from the court immediately after the marriage. The marriage ceremony might be a public occasion, taking place within the confines of courtly society, but the marriage relationship beyond that is private. The balance between the two aspects of marriage - social and personal - assuredly exists, but they are not as equal parts.

This applies also to the marriage of Milun and his mistress, in which it is also primarily as a means of uniting the couple permanently in their love for each other that the marriage is significant. This is not to deny the social importance of the marriage, as it is only through marriage that their relationship can become acceptable to society and be freed of the restrictions that have previously existed in it as a result of social opposition<sup>5</sup>. The particular preferability of marriage over any other form of love relationship is indicated by the determination of the couple's son that they should be united in this way: -

Li fiz respunt: 'Par fei, bels pere,  
Assemblerai vus e ma mere!  
Sun seignur qu'ele ad ocirai  
E espuser la vus ferai.'

Milun 497-500.

It is certain, indeed, that Milun and his mistress can marry only if her husband is dead. Marie, however, wants the marriage of her hero and heroine to be above reproach<sup>6</sup>, and it cannot, therefore be

achieved at the cost of a murder. Hence she introduces the fortuitous death of the lady's husband, when enables Milun and the lady to marry legally<sup>7</sup>. Thus, again, we find a coming together of social fulfilment and personal fulfilment in marriage, with the emphasis primarily on the personal dimension. Repeatedly through the final scenes of the lai there is a particular emphasis indeed on the love between the couple: -

Milun ad a sun fiz cunté  
De sa mere cum il l'ama,

Milun 488-89.

E cument il l'ad puis amee

Milun 492.

De lur amur e de lur bien  
Firent un lai li auncien,

Milun 531-32.

This is clearly a love match, as is the marriage between Guillaume and his mistress at the end of the Vair Palefroi. This marriage is specifically the goal of the young couple throughout the lai, as the only means for them to achieve any real degree of fulfilment in their love. Before she is married the girl is strictly guarded by her father, even the most innocent contact between her and Guillaume being extremely limited, despite their passionate love for each other (Vair Palefroi 186-221). In such circumstances, the value of marriage as a means to personal fulfilment is accentuated. To an extent the value that the young couple place on marriage is determined by the value placed on it by the girl's father, although he perceives marriage purely in terms of it as a social institution for them it is a means to personal happiness. It is because of the father's keenness to find her a husband that Guillaume realises that the only chance for them to achieve happiness is through marriage, acknowledging the power of the father's authority and seeking to satisfy his social ambitions (Vair Palefroi 222-44).

The marriage that finally takes place is, however, in defiance of this paternal authority, when it has become obvious that by no other means are the couple to have any chance of being united in their love. It appears as a gesture of desperation to secure a permanency and immunity for their relationship, which is only possible through a legally binding marriage: -

Li chevaliers sanz trestorner  
Se fet maintenant espouser  
Et par bon mariage ajoindre:  
Ne sont pas legier a desjoindre.

Vair Palefroï 1247-51

Although the legality of the marriage is stressed, the true significance of it for the couple is less in its social consequences, than as a means to personal fulfilment: -

Mesire Guillaume fist joie  
Molt grant, con cil qui de sa proie  
Estoit molt liez en son corage.

Vair Palefroï 1313-15

The success of the marriage in such terms is, thus, left in no doubt, as well as enabling the couple to enjoy much wealth and power in social terms.

The image of marriage to be found in Vair Palefroï is comparable to that projected in Deus Amanz. Here, too, the young couple, although fully aware of the social implications of marriage, perceive it above all as a means to happiness in their love for each other, which without marriage can exist only in a restricted way. Here, interestingly, an alternative to marriage is proposed as a means to achieving fulfilment in love, freed from the restrictions of parental authority. This is the boy's suggestion that the girl and he should run away together (Deus Amanz 84-91). It is certain that the girl's love is as deep as that of the boy, but hers is the voice of wisdom in response to his impetuosity. Thus she rejects his

suggestion which would necessarily cause her to sever relations with her father causing him grief. She is not prepared to sacrifice this loving relationship in order to achieve fulfilment in her love for the young boy while there is a possibility of reconciling the two (Deus Amanz 96-100). It must also be noted that an illicit relationship such as the boy proposes could never provide the stability and permanency of marriage as the basis for their love<sup>8</sup>. It is for these reasons that she insists that the young man should attempt to win her hand in marriage in accordance with the conditions imposed by her father. It is into the accomplishment of this that she puts all her efforts, advising her lover about the strength-giving potion brewed by her aunt and then repeatedly urging him to drink it during the climb itself (Deus Amanz 194-97; 209-10), losing weight and wearing thin clothes so as to be lighter for the boy to carry (Deus Amanz 174-76).

The ultimate failure of the couple to achieve their goal of marriage in no way undermines the importance of the concept of marriage as it is presented through the lai. As in the other lais in which the lovers are provided with a happy ending, the lovers here perceive marriage as the only means for them to be united in their love for each other, in a relationship condoned by society.

In Equitan also, marriage becomes the goal of the lovers, in recognition that by no other means can their relationship be acknowledged by society and be free of any threats against it by society. It is because of the restrictions on their relationship, which are unavoidable so long as it is not sanctioned by marriage, and because of their obsessive love for each other that they plan to murder the seneschal. As for Milun and his mistress, marriage is



only possible if the obstacle of the existing husband is removed. Here the couple have no scruples as to their unlawful means of achieving the fulfilment in marriage to which they aspire, and it is for this reason that Marie cannot condone their love or their plans for marriage. As in Deus Amanz, the lovers in Equitan do not attain their goal of marriage, but their experiences have, nonetheless, contributed to the image of marriage as the means of achieving a greater degree of fulfilment in love than is possible in other ways.

Such an image of marriage is also presented in alai of a very different character, Narcisus, expressed through Dané's aspirations to achieve happiness in her love for Narcisus. Dané first loves Narcisus from afar; even at this stage she longs not only to meet him and to know him, but also to achieve the greatest fulfilment in love through marriage. She recognises that marriage is for her an unavoidable social duty which will be imposed upon her by her father. What she longs for is to be able to find happiness and love within a socially desirable marriage: the perfect fusion of personal and social fulfilment (Narcisus 257-77; 340-50). This is her initial ambition while her desire for love is still tempered by reason and a sense of social obligation. She, more than any other character in the lai, allows herself to become obsessed by love to such an extent that all notions of moderation are cast aside and with them all thoughts of marriage<sup>9</sup>. The fact of her imagining that for her as the daughter of a king fulfilment in love might be possible outside of marriage is an indication of how much her desperation has clouded her perception of reality (Narcisus 359-1010). It is her initial image of fulfilled love within sanctioned marriage that is the only viable one, although unattainable by her in her love for Narcisus.

The dangers that Tyolet voluntarily confronts in the quest of the white hoof of the stag indicate the determination with which he sets about winning the hand of the haughty princess in marriage (Tyolet 419-703). His endangering his life to fulfil her marriage conditions appears somewhat less as gesture of love, however, than as a means to establish a reputation of prowess in the eyes of the society of the Arthurian court. Certainly it is his skills as a brave knight that are stressed in the course of the lai, more than his passion as a lover - to which indeed there is no reference - and his exploits win him the acclaim of the Arthurian knights as well as marriage to the princess. Thus, by the way it is presented, the balance between social and personal fulfilment to be derived from marriage appears to be the former, although with no suggestion that love will not also have a place in it<sup>10</sup>.

In Doon also marriage is won by the hero only at the cost of great efforts, here, too the significance of these appears more in the chivalric prowess they serve to demonstrate than as an expression of love for a woman he does not know. Thus marriage appears more as a reward bestowed upon Doon by society in recognition of his abilities as a rider -chevalier in its original sense - than as a means for personal fulfilment, and we have seen already the reluctance with which his bride enters into this conjugal relationship. This initial image of the marriage as of value almost exclusively in social terms does not apply accurately to the marriage as a whole. Very quickly after the wedding there comes to be an emotional dimension to it for the lady, expressed in her sorrow when he leaves her (Doon 167-72), and after Doon's return at the end of the lai the marriage is established unequivocally as a happy and successful love match<sup>11</sup>, based on the equal commitment of both partners to it. We

are told of the lady's love for Doon: -

li fiz a le pere mené  
a sa mere qui molt l'amot  
e durement le desirrot.

Doon 276-78

equally of Doon's love for his wife: -

por la dame que il ama,

Doon 284.

If at the time it was first contracted the marriage appeared as a reward in social terms, it now appears as a reward in personal terms: a reward granted to the lady by her husband now that she has developed the maturity to appreciate the value of love and marriage. Although the circumstances are in no way comparable, there is clearly a similarity in this reunion between Doon and his wife with that between Desiré and his mistress at the end of Desiré, based on this notion of personal fulfilment in marriage as something that can be withheld and then bestowed by one partner on the other when he/she feels it has been merited.

The marriage between Melion and the Irish princess appears very much in contrast to this, and is unlike any other portrayed in the lais. It starts unequivocally as a love match, not as the culmination of an already existing love relationship as in many of the lais, but as the launching of such a relationship. The Irish princess comes to Melion very much in the way of being from the Other World, introducing herself and offering herself (Melion 71-116): -

'sachiés que je sui molt vo drue.  
Onques home fors vos n'amai,  
ne jamais plus n'en ameraï.  
Forment vos ai oï loer,  
onques ne voloie altre amer  
fors vos tot seul; ne jamais jor  
vers nul autre n'avrai amor.'

Melion 110-16.

Her love may be inspired by Melion's reputation, but there is no

question of his having to demonstrate his worthiness to her personally. Indeed their relationship develops with unrivalled swiftness from this initial encounter to marriage, as Melion immediately responds to her offer of love by falling in love with her also and taking her to be his wife, with no intermediary stages (Melion 117-29). The initial success of this marriage in terms of personal fulfilment is unquestionable: -

A grant richoise l'espousa,  
e molt grant joie en demena;  
Melion 127-28.

.III. ans le tint en grant chierté,  
.II. fiez en ot en ces .III. ans,  
molt par en fu lies e joians.  
Melion 130-32.

Loving and fruitful, it appears as the model of perfect marriage, although this period of matrimonial bliss is in fact only short lived.

Another marriage that is presented as happy and loving is that between Bisclavret and his wife as it exists at the beginning of the lai: -

Femme ot espuse mut vailant  
E ki mut feseit beu semblant.  
Il amot li e ele lui,  
Bisclavret 21-23.

From this description there is apparently nothing to suggest that their marriage, based as it is on reciprocal love, will be anything other than a permanent relationship<sup>12</sup>.

An image of good marriage that is not deceptive in the way of those of Melion and Bisclavret is to be found in that of Desiré's parents. There is love between them and, although there is a period of childlessness, the mother then gives birth to a son, Desiré - a fruitfulness which sets the seal on the happiness and success of

this marriage (Desire 17-61).

This relationship is closely comparable to that between the King and Queen of Brittany in Tydorel. Of them we are told: -

en sa jovente, fame prist,  
fille a .I. duc, que il requist;  
por sa biauté, por sa franchise,  
l'a li sires des Bretons prise;  
molt la chierí e ennora,  
e ele durement l'ama.  
Onques ne fu jalous de li  
e cele onques nu deservi.

Tydorel 7-14.

This is clearly a marriage that is as fulfilling on a personal level as it is suitable on a social level. The one sorrow of their childlessness is only temporary, and, although it is not the King himself who is the true father, the birth of the son brings the crowning happiness to both spouses (Tydorel 171-78).

Although the marriage of the lady and the knight in Epervier is of secondary importance compared with the relationship between the lady and Ventilas, there are indications that the marriage is not simply a social convenience. We are told, indeed, of the love that the knight has for his wife: -

Ses sire ot vers li grant amor,  
Por sa biauté, por sa valor;  
Epervier 41-42.

Such a reference to this love is of no relevance to the main story of the lai and serves no purpose in directing the reader's interest or sympathy towards the characters. This reference to conjugal love must, therefore, be no more than conventional. The majority of authors of lais in which the husband is going to be cuckolded present marriage as a social convenience rather than as a relationship based on love. That the author of Epervier should pay so little attention to such details is perhaps an indication of the

lack of seriousness with which he broaches his subject, it is a light-hearted piece of writing.

Haveloc provides an image of marriage that is somewhat different from that to be found in any other lai. The marriage between Haveloc and Argentille appears initially as a marriage of social convenience, selfishly and callously arranged by Edelsi with no thought for the feelings of those involved. His concerns are solely with his own social ambitions, whatever the cost in terms of social and personal non-fulfilment for anybody else. Despite this, the marriage turns out to be a success both in social terms, as we have seen, and in personal terms. From their wedding night Haveloc loves Argentille absolutely: -

M s pus s'ageurerent tant,  
E de parole e de semblant,  
Ke [Q]il l'ama e od li jut  
Cum od s'espuse fere dut.  
La nuit ke primes [Q]i parla  
Tel joie en ot e tant l'ama

Haveloc 391-96.

This love is reciprocated, Argentille's feelings for her husband manifested in her visit to the hermit for an explanation of her dream about Haveloc, and in her subsequent questioning of him: -

Priveement e par amur  
Li demande dunt il ert nez

Haveloc 540-41.

Through their ensuing adventures, she is an exemplary wife in the support and encouragement with which she provides her husband, and their marriage is clearly a strong and loving one, as Haveloc well appreciates: -

Sa feme ama e mult cheri  
[Kar] ele l'ot ben deservi;

Haveloc 977-78.

It is the reciprocity of their relationship which appears as a fundamental quality, Argentille helping Haveloc to reclaim his

throne and subsequently he enabling her to reclaim hers.

The most considered study of marriage is to be found in Eliduc. It is unique among the lais because it concentrates on two marriage centred relationships, based on apparently very different personal relationships, both involving Eliduc. There is the marriage between Eliduc and Guildeluëc as presented at the beginning of the story. This is a socially desirable marriage but also a loving one: -

Ensemble furent l'ungement,  
Mut s'entreamerent l'ëaument.

Eliduc 11-12.

The love between them is demonstrated in Guildeluëc's sorrow over Eliduc's imposed exile from Brittany and Eliduc's pledges of faithfulness: -

Forment demeine grant dolor  
Al departir de sun seignur;  
Mes il l'aseürat de sei  
Qu'il li porterat bone fei.

Eliduc 81-84.

Thus we have the image of a marriage that is loving and stable, which has lasted for an indefinite but clearly extended period of time. The bond between them continues during the period of their separation; in Guildeluëc it is the same love that survives (Eliduc 709; 957-60). Eliduc for his part retains a strong sense of the personal loyalty that he owes his wife: -

De sa femme li remembra  
E cum il li asseüra  
Que bone fei li portereit  
E l'ëaument se cuntendreit.

Eliduc 323-26.

This marital faithfulness comes, however, to seem to him a duty rather than the sincerely felt desire that it originally was. His relationship with Guildeluëc loses its significance as a form of personal fulfilment for him (Eliduc 462-77)<sup>13</sup>.

This is because, with a passion very different from his affection for his wife, he has fallen in love with Guilliadun, and perceives a relationship with her to be the most vital form of personal fulfilment necessary for his happiness. Eliduc and Guilliadun do enjoy a degree of fulfilment in their love for each other at this time, while Eliduc is still married to Guildeluëc but living in Exeter (Eliduc 519-20). For both, however, it is only partial fulfilment. Eliduc has too great a sense of guilt over his betrayal of his wife to enjoy his new love fully. For Guilliadun it is only in marriage that their relationship can find its true fulfilment.

Ele l'amat de tel amur,  
De lui volt faire sun seignur.

Eliduc 513-14.

So integral is marriage to her perception of a consummate love relationship that it is when she discovers that Eliduc is married and his marriage to her therefore impossible, that she falls into her death-like swoon. For Guilliadun, there can be no real personal fulfilment in a love relationship that does not culminate in marriage. It is for the sake of her love for Eliduc and in expectation of marriage to him that she has left behind her country and her family, in other words, that she has renounced the personal and social relationships that have made up her life to this point. Although there has been some joy in their mutual love, a love relationship which holds no hope of marriage has no attraction for her. She cannot accept to live in partial fulfilment of her love for Eliduc, if there is no chance of achieving the absolute fulfilment of it which exists only in marriage (Eliduc 847-58). Her attitude to marriage highlights its significance as a form of personal fulfilment distinct from all other love relationships.

It is the voluntary sacrifice by Guildeluëc of her own marriage to



Eliduc that enables Guilliadun to achieve the degree of personal fulfilment to which she has aspired. This supreme gesture by Guildeluëc is specifically motivated for the sake of the obvious love between Guilliadun and Eliduc. When Guildeluëc discovers the entranced Guilliadun in the hermit's chapel, she is struck by the young girl's beauty and immediately convinced of the depth of love that Eliduc must feel for her, also of the rightness of such love. It is in recognition of the value of their love and of the worthiness of the lovers to achieve every possible happiness in it, that she re-unites them and provides them with the opportunity of marriage as the only means for them to attain such happiness (Eliduc 1021-1130).

There can, indeed, be no doubt as to the happiness that marriage brings to Eliduc and Guilliadun in their love: -

Ensemble vesquirent meint jur,  
Mut ot entre eus parfite amur.

Eliduc 1149-50.

Thus we find in Eliduc two different images of marriage, both personally fulfilling, one as an ongoing relationship based on loyalty and affectionate love, the other as the culmination of passionate love.

From looking at these *lais*, we see the extent to which marriage is presented as significant not only as a social institution (see Chapter II), but also as a personal relationship. Although in some *lais* it appears primarily either in social terms or in personal terms, in the majority it appears as a balance: the perfect reconciliation between the desires of the individual for fulfilment in love and of the demands of society upon him/her. The way that the balance actually falls between the two aspect, varies to some

extent from lai to lai; it is the balance that is essential in distinguishing marriage from other love relationships. It is, indeed, only in marriage that a love relationship can be condoned by society and that there can be a fusion between the life of the individual as a social being and his/her life as a private, emotional being. Although a degree of personal fulfilment can be enjoyed in other types of love relationships, as will be seen later in this chapter, it is only in marriage that the couple can be freed of restrictions which are imposed upon them by the opposition of society in general or of particular figures in society, endowed by it with an authority over the lovers. It is, thus, that marriage in many of the lais appears as the crowning of a love relationship, providing the couple with a degree of fulfilment accessible to them in no other way.

### 3. Friendship

Friendship as portrayed in the French Literature of the Middle Ages is usually between men in the form of companionship. It exists between social peers, and has an important social as well as personal significance.

In the lais, there is little emphasis placed on this type of relationship<sup>14</sup>. Where there is the portrayal of such close relationships between men it is usually in a specifically social context.

This is the case for the friendship between Lanval and Gauvain in Lanval. There is, nonetheless, a certain personal tone in Gauvain's concern for Lanval's welfare, which goes beyond the obligation of one courtly knight to another. This emerges firstly at the time of

the gathering of the knights for the Feast of Saint John, it is he who urges the others to include Lanval in their festivities (Lanval 225-36). Again, at the time of Lanval's trial, it is he who comes to the fore in his support, both material and moral, of Lanval (Lanval 407-14).

Gauvain appears in a similar role in Tyolet. It is he who goes off to find Tyolet after the treacherous knight has arrived at Arthur's court bearing the stag's white hoof which he has taken from Tyolet. It is Gauvain who ensures that Tyolet is looked after and healed of his wounds (Tyolet 535-74). When Tyolet returns to Arthur's court he is greeted with much joy by Arthur, Gauvain and the other knights (Tyolet 621-32). The warmth of their welcome shows that there is a more personal feeling than simply a sense of duty binding these men together.

A somewhat different sort of friendship is featured in Epervier, more clearly a companionship between two men: -

Dui chevalier jadis estoient  
Qui molt durement s'entramoient:  
Onques entr'eus n'ot point d'envie;  
Molt part menoient bèle vie:  
Chevalerie maintenoient,  
Et ensamble toz jors erroient;  
Li uns n'eust sanz l'autre rien:  
Partout et au mal et au bien  
Partissoient ensemble andui:  
Li uns n'eust sanz l'autre anui;  
Lor avoir ert entr'eus communs.

Epervier 11-21.

Although there is such emphasis on the particular closeness of this friendship, providing the reader with the model of an ideal relationship between two knights, it is ultimately only a description. We are not in the course of the lai shown their friendship in action, and the quality of their feelings for each

other is quite irrelevant to the story itself. Thus, like the reference to the husband's love for his wife (Epervier 41), such a description of the king's friendship appears to be gratuitous, of value only in itself and not within the context of the lai. It is nonetheless of interest as an insight into the nature of ideal chivalric companionship.

This is a friendship apparently between social equals, as is usually the case with bonds of companionship. There can, however, also be an emotional and personally fulfilling dimension to lord-vassal relationships. This we find in Tyolet, the episode, referred to above, of Tyolet's return to Arthur's court after the quest. It is Arthur, even before Gauvain, who welcomes Tyolet, hugging and kissing him: -

Li rois contre lui s'est levez,  
ses braz li a au col getez,  
puis le baise par grant amor.

Tyolet 625-27.

Here the love felt by a lord for his vassal is explicit.

Such feeling is to be found also in the relationship between the King and Desiré in Desiré. We are told at the beginning of the story: -

Li reis l'ama e tint mut cher,  
Desiré 67

and later: -

Li rais l'aime par grant amur,  
Desiré 417.

There is no point in this lai at which Desiré loses the King's love; throughout it he has every chance of enjoying a personally fulfilling as well as socially fulfilling relationship with his lord.

There is also a particular closeness in the relationship between Graelent and the King in Graelent, although the benefits of this are enjoyed only at the beginning of the lai (Graelent 15).

We have seen earlier in this chapter how a close personal relationship exists in other lais between a lord and vassal. In these, Espine and Guingamor, the bond is also familial.

The love that can exist between a lord and vassal as a potent part of their relationship is most apparent in the relationships between Melion and King Arthur, and Bisclavret and the King of Brittany. At the end of both of these lais, Melion and Bisclavret, the werewolf-knights, although restored to human form, have lost forever their relationship with their wives. The intimacy that exists between the king and vassal appears almost as a substitute for this lost love relationship. Certainly it is much emphasised in both that the feudal relationship is not only based on reciprocal social duty, but is also a highly charged emotional one. This is expressed in Bisclavret by the joy with which the King responds to Bisclavret's return to human form: -

Li reis le curut enbracier;  
Plus de cent feiz l'acole et baise.  
Bisclavret 300-01.

The situation is very similar at the end of Melion, with Melion leaving Ireland with Arthur: -

Melion a od lui mené;  
molt en fu liés, grant joie en a,  
Melion 578-79.

In all of these relationships considered above, the bond that is central to each - familial, conjugal, knightly/feudal - has both a personal and a social significance. In these relationships there is often a coincidence between the two that enables the individuals

involved to find absolute fulfilment, equally in social and in personal terms.

In other relationships, we shall see, personal fulfilment is achieved with a disregard for the demands or expectations of society. These include many of the love relationships that are featured in the *lais*, those that are not sanctioned by marriage.

#### 4. Adulterous Love

This is the most common form of personal fulfilment to be explored in depth in the *lais*.

In *Yonec*, it is only through such an adulterous relationship that the lady can achieve any personal fulfilment. She is aware of this from the beginning of the story when she dreams of having a lover who would bring happiness into her life (*Yonec* 67-104). It is in instant response to this wish that the hawk-knight comes to her and offers his love. It is thus very clear that he brings her this love to compensate for the lack of love and happiness in her marriage. Marie places much emphasis on the hardships suffered by the lady in her marriage and the unjustified cruelty; this appears not only through the words of the lady herself (*Yonec* 67-104), but also in the impersonal narrational voice (*Yonec* 25-50). It is this, above all, that indicates the author's own attitude to the lady's adulterous relationship with Muldumarec<sup>15</sup>. Before the relationship even begins, Marie takes care to enlist the reader's sympathy for the *mal-mariée* against her *vielz jalus* of a husband. The lady is presented as the innocent victim of her husband's indifference to her feelings; her unhappiness is understandable, as is her longing

for love as a source of personal fulfilment<sup>16</sup>. Thus, Marie makes it clear that this adulterous relationship between the lady and Muldumarec is justified within the context<sup>17</sup>.

Marie further uses the character of Muldumarec to indicate the seriousness of the relationship and thereby its worthiness. Muldumarec demonstrates his sincerity of feeling towards the lady by taking Holy Communion and by telling her that he has loved her for a long time and has come specifically to offer her his love. This has been possible for him only because she expressed her desire for such love (Yonec 123-34). He says: -

'Unkes femme fors vus n'amai  
Ne jamés autre n'amerai.'

Yonec 129-30.

Such lack of frivolousness in love is important for Marie as a basis for a relationship that can be judged to be good. Marie, as we see, pays particular attention to contextualising this relationship between the lady and Muldumarec, and in directing the reader's sympathy to the lovers. In these circumstances, of the lady as an unhappy mal-mariée and the knight as a devout Christian and single minded lover, such adulterous love is, in Marie's eyes, deserving of fulfilment. From the consideration of just one relationship it is of course impossible to draw conclusions as to Marie's views on adulterous relationships in general. Yet, even from this, because of her laying such stress on the situation in which the relationship takes place and on the character of the individuals involved, we can be alert to the possibility that not all adulterous relationships receive her approbation<sup>18</sup>.

That the relationship allows both the lady and Muldumarec to enjoy a great deal of personal fulfilment is undeniable. As soon as

Muldumarec has proved his willingness to take Holy Communion their love is consummated: -

La dame gist lez sun ami:  
Unke si bel cuple ne vi!

Yonec 191-92.

Although Muldumarec cannot stay with her all the time, she is able to see him often: -

E nuit e jur e tost e tart  
Ele l'ad tut a sun pleisir.

Yonec 222-23.

This fulfilment in love provides the lady with immense joy, which is magnified by being in such extreme contrast to her previous unhappiness. So deeply does this love fulfilment affect her that it expresses itself in her physical appearance: she recovers all the beauty that she had lost in the period of her wretchedness: -

Pur la grant joie u ele fu  
Que suvent puet veeir sun dru,  
Esteit tuz sis semblanz changiez.

Yonec 225-27.

It is, ironically, because she is too fulfilled and too happy in this love affair that she finally loses it, as we shall see in the following chapter.

The impermanency of this love relationship is a feature of many adulterous affairs. However personally fulfilled the lovers may be, they can never enjoy the security of marriage. The opposition of the cuckolded husband and of society is always close by as a threat, and the lovers are committed to a double existence, divided between the time they must spend with their lawful spouse and the time they can snatch to be with their lover.

In Yonec, the lovers are able to spend a lot of time together and suffer few restrictions on the development of their relationship.



However, as with any adulterous affair, their love must remain a secret from society and can never be integrated into their social existence. It can be maintained only if these basic limitations imposed upon it by its adulterous nature are observed by the lovers. There cannot be the coincidence of personal fulfilment and social fulfilment such as can be achieved through marriage.

The adulterous relationship in Yonéc can be compared with that in Guigemar. Again we find Marie taking care to establish the circumstances surrounding this affair between Guigemar and the lady. From the beginning of the lai, Guigemar is established as a worthy hero - a good active knight, fond of his family. His need for love is also established, and is indeed insisted upon. His need is very different from that expressed by the lady in Yonéc. Her need for love is one she feels very consciously, whereas the necessity for Guigemar to love is presented impersonally, almost on a cosmic level: his need for love is dictated by Nature and by his destiny.

It is by means of the intervention of the supernatural that Guigemar is forced into an awareness of his destiny and the essential role that love is to play within it. This awareness of need, brought about by the encounter with the white doe, is his first necessary step towards fulfilment in love<sup>19</sup>. She tells him that only a woman who loves him and whom he loves will heal him of the arrow wound he has suffered: -

Ne par mire, ne par poisun  
N'avras tu jamés garisun  
De la plaie k'as en la quisse,  
De si ke cele te guarisse  
Ki souffera pur tue amur  
Issi grant peine e tel dolor  
K'unkes femme taunt ne suffri,  
E tu referas taunt pur li;

Guigemar 111-18.

The doe's predictions highlight the significance of love for Guigemar as part of his destiny to be accepted and fulfilled<sup>20</sup>, this is reinforced by the clearly magical and symbolic character of the arrow wound, which is negative and which is to be replaced by the positive wound of love<sup>21</sup>. This happens as soon as he meets the lady, instantly falling in love with her: -

Mes Amur l'ot feru al vif;  
Ja ert sis quors en grant estrif,  
Kar la dame l'ad si nafré,  
Tut ad sun país ublié.  
De sa plaie nul mal ne sent.

Guigemar 379-83.

This is evidently the love that was destined to be.

That this love is achieved by Guigemar is not solely dependent upon the encounter with the doe. To achieve fulfilment in love, he has himself to demonstrate a commitment to such love so strong that it negates all other concerns. This Guigemar does by isolating himself from his own people and his own country, as he knows that however great the fulfilment in social terms he has achieved in that society, it is not there that he can find fulfilment in love (Guigemar 123-60). Given the particular character of the love as in a sense predestined, Guigemar is not by his conscious efforts alone able to attain it. Success in his quest is brought about only by the intervention of the supernatural again<sup>22</sup>. Although knowing that he must find love, Guigemar does not know where to find it. It is the magical self-navigating boat that enables him to reach the ancient city in which the lady lives<sup>23</sup>.

Subsequently the supernatural intervenes again to allow the relationship to develop and for the lovers to be re-united finally in a more permanent situation, as the magical ship reappears when

the lovers are most in need to carry first Guigemar, then the lady to Brittany where they are finally reunited.

The important role that the supernatural plays in initiating and directing the relationship endows the love with a force of destiny that cannot be avoided by the lovers<sup>24</sup>. By presenting love so emphatically in this way, Marie indicates her support for the lovers in their adulterous relationship. This is reinforced by the portrayal of the lady as a mal-mariée, deriving no pleasure from her cloistered existence (Guigemar 209-60)<sup>25</sup>. It is furthermore the intrinsic quality of the love between Guigemar and his mistress that determines beyond question their worthiness to find fulfilment within it<sup>26</sup>. There is particular stress on the reciprocity of their love. This appears firstly in the descriptions of nascent love as experienced simultaneously but separately by both of them (Guigemar 379-84; 397-98; 425-36). It is the lady's niece who specifically draws attention to the suitability of the love between them because of an equivalence between them: -

'Ceste amur sereit convenable,  
Si vus amdui feussez estable:  
Vus estes bels e ele est bele!'

Guigemar 451-53.

The notion of the equivalence of the lovers in their qualities and of the reciprocity of their love is one that is important to Marie<sup>27</sup>. Here the young girl appears, then, as Marie's own voice in her attitude to love and her encouragement of the lovers. It is a criterion of judgment that is equally applicable to other love relationships portrayed in Marie's *lais*.

Marie gives further expression to her views on love by standing aside from the action and speaking in her narrational voice: -

Amur est plaie dedenz cors  
E si ne piert nient defors;  
Ceo est un mal ki lunges tient,  
Pur ceo que de Nature vient.  
Plusur le tienent a gabeis,  
Si cume cil vilain curteis  
Ki jolivent par tut le mund,  
Puis s'avantent de ceo que funt.  
N'est pas amur, einz est folie,  
E mauvestié e lecherie!  
Ki un en peot leal trover  
Mut le deit servir e amer  
E estre a sun comandement.

Guigemar 483-95.

This merits being quoted in full because, as a testimonial to Marie's vision of love, it is relevant to the consideration of any love relationship featured in her *lais*, be it adulterous or not. We see, thus, that she perceives love to be a natural force over which individuals have no control. Because it is derived from nature it is desirable and must be treated with respect. It is the responsibility of those affected by it to be sincere and faithful in their loving. She contrasts this seriousness of love with a flippancy which might sometimes pass as love, but which, for her, is not at all and which she condemns. Such criteria can be applied to judging lovers in *lais* other than Guigemar.

We have seen how it applies to the relationship between Muldumarec and the lady in Yonec. Also of relevance to that relationship is the ideal of fulfilment in love as inextricably entwined with the fulfilment of destiny. This aspect of their love is expressed by Muldumarec, first in his telling the lady of his own powerlessness to come to her until she wished for it, despite his own love for her and despite his supernatural character: -

'Mes ne poeie a vus venir  
Ne fors de mun paleis eissir,  
Si vus ne m'eüssez requis.'

Yonec 131-33.

Although aware of his destiny to love her, he has been powerless to

control it; and the lady, who had within her the power to fulfil his destiny and thereby to achieve her own personal fulfilment, was not aware of it, and so she too was in effect powerless. The power of fate is a theme throughout the lai, and Muldumarec, from the beginning of the relationship with the lady, predicts how it will be brought to an end (Yonec 199-210). He is also able to predict the birth and future of his son (Yonec 422-36). Muldumarec's powers of prescience provide him, however with no control over the course of fate itself.

Thus lovers, in Yonec as in Guigemar, can be seen to be the pawns of destiny, their only power lying in their choice to respect destiny and to fulfil their responsibilities to it.

Evidently it is most directly to the lovers in Guigemar itself that Marie's pronouncement of good and bad love applies. It is certainly in this of all Marie's lais that there is most emphasis on destiny. Marie also stresses the seriousness of the love between them. Guigemar insists on the depth of his feeling for the lady: -

'Dame, fet il, jeo meorc pur vus!'

Guigemar 501.

Furthermore he echoes Marie's narrational voice in pointing to the differences between a woman who will love honestly and one who will not. The latter seeks only amusement in a relationship and enjoys keeping a suitor dangling after her love. Of her he says: -

'Femme jolive de mestier  
Se deit lunc tens faire preier  
Pur sei cherir, que c'il ne quit  
Que ele eit usé cel deduit;'

Guigemar 515-18.

The former, on the other hand, will appreciate the love that is offered to her and will be grateful for it. In reciprocating it

frankly with her own love she will be happy and deserving of her happiness. Guigemar says of such a woman: -

'Mes la dame de bon purpens,  
Ki en sei eit valur ne sens,  
S'ele treve hume a sa maniere,  
Ne se ferat vers lui trop fiere,  
Ainz l'amerat, s'en avrat joie.'

Guigemar 519-23.

This is a clear indictment against the haughty dompna figure; and the lady in Guigemar, despite her initial fears about entering too precipitously into a relationship, recognises the merit of which Guigemar says and responds immediately by giving him her love. She thereby proves herself to be an exemplary honest woman, deserving of fulfilment by Marie's criteria.

Having established beyond a doubt the quality of the lovers and their love, Marie then offers an insight into the happiness they enjoy within the relationship itself: -

Des ore est Guigemar a aise:  
Ensemble gisent e parolent  
E sovent baisent e acolent.  
Bien lur c'ovienge del surplus,  
De ceo que li autre unt en us!  
Ceo m'est avis, an e demi  
Fu Guigemar ensemble od li;  
Mut fu delituse la vie.

Guigemar 530-37.

Despite this degree of joy derived from their love, the relationship at this stage is not ideal; like any other adulterous affair, it is restricted because vulnerable to threat of discovery by the lady's husband, and, therefore, of permanent separation.

The separation that does come about appears, like the rest of their relationship, as an inexorable part of their fate: -

Mes Fortune, ki ne s'oblíe,  
Sa roe turne en poi d'hure:  
L'un met desuz, l'autre desure.

Guigemar 538-40.

It is also necessary as a means towards their final reunion, free from the threat of the lady's husband. It is henceforth a relationship that is open in society, presumably with the possibility now of being a permanent one: -

A grant joie s'amie en meine:  
Ore ad trespassee sa peine!

Guigemar 881-82.

There is, however, a certain openness about the ending of Guigemar. The nature of the relationship between Guigemar and the lady, and the nature of their relationship with society is not fully resolved. Unlike at the end of Milun and Eliduc, there is no suggestion that a marriage takes place, no suggestion, indeed, that such a marriage is possible, as at the last mention of the husband he is still alive (Guigemar 657-59)<sup>28</sup>.

Another adulterous relationship portrayed by Marie is in Laustic. This too receives Marie's approval<sup>29</sup>. Here again the lady is a mal-mariée, whose husband is oppressive in his treatment of her and indifferent to her feelings (Laustic 49; 91-119); as well as the external circumstances the relationship is furthermore justified by the quality of the lovers' feelings: -

La femme sun veisin ama;  
Tant la requist, tant la preia  
E tant par ot en lui grant bien  
Qu'ele l'ama sur tute rien,  
Tant pur le bien qu'ele en oï,  
Tant pur ceo qu'il iert pres de li.

Laustic 23-28.

It is because of their discretion that any such fulfilment is possible. Here the restrictions implicit, as we have seen, in any adulterous relationship, are far more assertive than in either Yonec or Guigemar. Their relationship is not sexually consummated and their contact is limited to conversation. The love between the couple is nonetheless as deep as that of any other couple, and even

this limited degree of contact affords them much happiness: -

N'unt gueres rien ki lur despleise,  
Mut esteient amdui a eise,  
Fors tant k'il ne poent venir  
Del tut ensemble a lur pleisir,  
Laustic 45-48.

The situation of relative personal fulfilment, although not permanent, does last for quite a period of time: -

Lungement se sunt entreame,  
Laustic 57.

In Milun the contact between the lovers is still more limited, limitations imposed upon them by the fact of the lady being married. It is only by means of letters carried between Milun and his mistress by the swan that they can communicate at all (Milun 157-288). This is far less a degree of fulfilment than they have enjoyed prior to the lady's marriage, and less still than are able to enjoy in their subsequent marriage. Yet even this allows them to express their love to each other and to be assured that this love is reciprocated. Thus, thanks to Milun's ingenuity, they continue to find some consolation in their relationship to compensate for the other hardships they have to endure during the twenty years of the lady's marriage<sup>30</sup>.

Very different from this relationship based on restrained and patient love, is the adulterous relationship between Equitan and the seneschal's wife. The circumstances of this relationship and the character of those involve that Marie's sympathies are not unequivocally on the side of the lovers. We saw in Chapter I that this is possibly suggested even in the description of the lady, particularly in the contrast they present with that of her cuckolded husband, whose personal qualities are particularly emphasised (Equitan 21-24). He appears as very different from the repressive,



jealous husband of many of the lais, and less than deserving of the betrayal of both lord and wife that he suffers<sup>31</sup>.

The nature of the adulterous love in itself also falls short of those standards set by Marie for her other lovers, who are presented as worthy of what happiness they can achieve in their love. Equitan is well aware of the base betrayal of his vassal the pursuit of such a love affair implies (Equitan 71-76), and the somewhat contorted arguments with which he convinces himself of the rightness of this love are certainly not intended to convince the reader likewise. They are no more than a confection contrived to suit his own purposes and lacking any moral basis<sup>32</sup>.

Equitan's mistress is equally aware of the unsuitability of the relationship. What she emphasises is the inequality of their social status, an inequality which, she suspects, will extend to other aspects of the relations between them, which will, therefore, never be stable<sup>33</sup>. She says: -

'Amur n'est pruz se n'est egals.'  
Equitan 137.

This view relates to that expressed by the lady's ~~niece~~ in Guigemar, and is a just one. The lady's fear in Equitan is that in a relationship based on such inequality Equitan will abuse his position of social superiority to indulge in a love that is only flippant (Equitan 117-48). She only agrees to grant him her love when he assures her of his sincerity, offering to play the role of the subservient lover in the traditional courtly mode (Equitan 150-76). He says: -

'Vus seiez dame e jeo servanz,  
Vus orguilluse e jeo preianz.'  
Equitan 175-76.

For Marie, who places such emphasis on the importance of equivalence in her lovers, a love relationship based on such notions of the roles to be played by the lovers cannot be considered a good one for her, it is not the relationship between dompna and supplicant that is held up as ideal. We see from this how distinctly apart her concept of love is from that known as courtly love. The adultery in Equitan is not, therefore, one that receives her full approbation. She has too much respect for those arguments against this relationship, and too little for those that are put up in its defence. Although the relationship provides the lovers with much personal fulfilment, it is less this they deserve than their ultimate fate, which is brought about directly as a result of the lack of restraint in their lust<sup>34</sup>.

It appears, then, that fulfilment in adultery is not justifiable in all circumstances, at least by the standards applied by Marie; her lovers have to have a sense of responsibility as to the consequences of their actions beyond themselves.

This emerges also from her criticisms of the Queen's pursuit of an adulterous relationship in Lanval. Although the relationship is never fulfilled in any sense, the Queen nevertheless perceives it as a possible source of personal fulfilment (Lanval 263-68). She says to Lanval: -

'Ma druërie vus otrei:  
Mut devez estre liez de mei!'

Lanval 267-68.

It is difficult to imagine that she is unaware of the dubious nature of the happiness in love she is proposing. Certainly Lanval has no hesitation in condemning it, making it clear to both the Queen and the reader that an adulterous love involving the betrayal of the

lord-vassal bond cannot be countenanced. The pursuit of personal fulfilment cannot have priority over all other considerations, according to Marie. The grounds on which Lanval repudiates the Queen's advances can be compared with those arguments put forward in Equitan against that adulterous relationship (Lanval 269-74)<sup>35</sup>.

The condemnation of this type of adultery, involving the betrayal of a feudal relationship, is not peculiar to Marie. In Graelent and Guingamor the queens are similarly portrayed in a poor light for seeking personal fulfilment in disregard of their social obligations (Guingamor 41-106; Graelent 57-127)<sup>36</sup>.

The situation in Eliduc is more complex than in any of the other lais considered, and the basis for moral judgment more difficult to define. The adulterous relationship under scrutiny in the lai is that of Eliduc and Guilliadun. Unusually, it is the man not the woman who is married. A further complication arises from the fact that at the time the love first develops between Eliduc and Guilliadun, he is in her father's service. It is Eliduc who is aware of the full implications of pursuing such a relationship, as it is he who will be guilty of betraying both his lord and his wife. Guilliadun, unaware that Eliduc is married, does not know the relationship to be adulterous, believing in the possibility of its leading to marriage. The responsibilities for the nature of the relationship are placed, thus, entirely upon Eliduc's shoulders, just as any blame can be. In his consciousness of the arguments against a relationship with Guilliadun, Eliduc can be compared with Equitan. Like him, Eliduc acknowledges to himself the loyalty that he owes both Guilliadun and the King of Exeter and the extent to which his adultery represents a betrayal.

Guildeluëc is certainly not the female counterpart of the vielz gelus. Her situation, as the victim of her husband's infidelity, is comparable to that of the seneschal in Equitan. The marriage between Eliduc and Guildeluëc has been a loving relationship; any betrayal of it is in personal as much as in social terms.

Far more than for Equitan, Eliduc's suffering in his dilemma is emphasised. Repeatedly he refers to his duty to be faithful to his wife (Eliduc 323-26; 462-77), but without persuading himself to renounce his desire for a relationship with Guilliadun. This highlights the extent of his passion for Guilliadun; his justification lies in the depth of his love: -

Mes ne s'en peot n'ient jeter  
Que il nen eimt la dameisele,  
Guilliadun ki tant fu bele,  
De li veeir e de parler  
E de baisier e d'acoler;

Eliduc 468-72.

If ignorance is a form of innocence, then Eliduc, with his knowledge of all the facts, is no less guilty than Equitan. But, whereas Equitan tries to dismiss the arguments that oppose the fulfilment of his desires by distorting them, Eliduc never stoops to such self-delusion. It is because of his self-honesty that he suffers such anguish in his dilemma - torn between a sense of loyalty and a desire for love - and it is because of this much emphasised anguish that the reader sympathises with Eliduc<sup>37</sup>. This must surely be Marie's intention: she portrays Eliduc not as blameless in his pursuit of personal fulfilment in this way, but as a man overwhelmed by passion and suffering deeply for it: -

En grant peine fu Elidus.

Eliduc 477.

Mut se teneit a maubailli,

Eliduc 462.

Also in his defence is his retaining a strong sense of how love should ideally be: -

Mes ja ne li querra amur  
Ki li aturt a deshonor,

Eliduc 473-74.

Furthermore, he is presented as a largely passive figure within the relationship with Guilliadun. It is Guilliadun who first takes the initiative, having fallen in love with him because of his reputation as a knight, she invites him to visit her, and sends him gifts as tokens of her love (Eliduc 273-454)<sup>38</sup>.

It is then the King's encouragement of his daughter to spend more time with Eliduc which allows the relationship to flourish with a degree of openness (Eliduc 492-549): -

Mut en fu liee la pucele!

Eliduc 499.

Mut est joius, mut ad bien fet.  
Sovent peot parler od s'amie,  
Granz est entre eus la druërie.

Eliduc 540-42.

Their love affords both Eliduc and Guilliadun much happiness at this time, although it is, as Eliduc knows, a relationship founded on his betrayal of Guideluëc and the King and his deception of Guilliadun. Aside from the consideration of the nature of the relationship, Marie offers an insight into the nature of the love itself. There can be no doubt as to the sincerity of Eliduc's feelings for Guilliadun, and these are reciprocated with the same degree of seriousness. Guilliadun is, indeed, much concerned about the suitability of love between her and Eliduc, fearful it might be undesirable on grounds of social inequality<sup>39</sup>. She says: -

'Ne sai s'il est de haute gent,'

Eliduc 389.

She is also very conscious of the need of seriousness in love,

reassured by the chamberlain about Eliduc's lack of frivolity: -

'Li chevaliers n'est pas jolis;  
Jeol tienc a curteis e a sage,'  
Eliduc 422-23.

As well as her father it is the chamberlain who urges her towards the development of this relationship as being commendable: -

'Asez purrez avoir leisir  
De mustrer lui vostre pleisir,'  
Eliduc 453-54.

Once assured of the worthiness of this love, Guilliadun is honest and generous in the gift of her affections to Eliduc, just as the lady in Guigemar is advised to be.

The vital importance of love for her is indicated before there is any certainty that she will achieve fulfilment in it. Before knowing whether Eliduc reciprocates her feelings, she declares: -

'E si il n'ad de m'amur cure,  
Mut me tendrai a maubaillie:  
James n'avrai joie en ma vie.'  
Eliduc 398-400,

Later she says: -

'E s'ele ne peot lui avoir,  
Une chose sace de veir:  
James n'avra humme vivant'  
Eliduc 515-17.

Thus it is evident that as a couple Eliduc and Guilliadun are perfectly matched; the love that each feels for the other is equally deeply rooted and in no way casual or frivolous: -

Kar anguissement l'amot  
E ele lui, ke plus ne pot.  
Mes n'ot entre eus nule folie,  
Joliveté ne vileinie;  
Eliduc 573-76.

The relationship between Eliduc and Guilliadun is to a large extent justified by the quality of their love, as emphasised by Marie; this is reinforced by Guildeluëc's subsequent defence of it (Eliduc 1021-1144). It is thus evident that Marie supports this love as

one deserving of fulfilment.

There remains, nonetheless, a degree of ambivalence in her attitude towards Eliduc and about the way in which he seeks to achieve such personal fulfilment. The reader is reminded of this ambivalence through the lai, partly through Eliduc's own continued doubts about the adultery (Eliduc 585-618). She also introduces the sailor to express an extreme view against it. When a storm strikes the ship carrying Eliduc and Guilliadun to Brittany, the sailor blames Eliduc for this, claiming it to be God's punishment for Eliduc's adultery: -

'Femme leal espuse avez  
E sur celi autre enmenez  
Cuntre Deu e cuntre la lei,  
Cuntre dreiture e cuntre fei;'

Eliduc 835-38.

Marie might not subscribe fully to this view - she certainly expresses no sympathy for the sailor when he is thrown overboard by Eliduc (Eliduc 859-64)<sup>40</sup>. There is, nonetheless, some justification in his accusations against Eliduc. More significant than the sailor's anger is Guilliadun's own reaction to the discovery that she has been deceived by Eliduc and that their relationship is adulterous. Her falling into a death-like swoon is a mute but irrefutable rejection of an adulterous relationship in which there is, apparently no possibility of the consummate fulfilment of marriage (Eliduc 847-58). More explicitly she expresses her repudiation of the adultery when roused from the trance: -

'Pechiē ad fet k'il m'enginna:  
Femme ot espuse, nel me dist  
Ne unques semblant ne m'en fist.  
Quant de sa femme oï parler,  
De duel ke oi m'estut paumer.  
Vileinement descunseilllee  
M'ad en autre tere laissiee.  
Trahie m'ad, ne sai que deit.'

Eliduc 1076-83.

There is no doubt that Guilliadun is justified in her impassioned

declaration against Eliduc's treatment of her. Marie, however, does not allow this indictment of her hero to stand baldly; she provides, through Guildeluec, a defence of his behaviour. All that Eliduc has done is because of the depth of his love for Guilliadun, which has been manifest from his extreme grief over Guilliadun's apparent death (Eliduc 1085-1102).

Thus we see that throughout there is an equivocation in Marie's attitude towards Eliduc and his pursuit of personal fulfilment in a relationship with Guilliadun. This she conveys to the reader through the alternation of sympathy for and criticism against Eliduc expressed by various characters and by the narrator's own voice<sup>41</sup>. It is the sincerity and the seriousness of the love between them that justifies its ultimate fulfilment. It is not, however, in an adulterous relationship that this fulfilment can rightfully be achieved. Hence it is, as we have seen, only through marriage that the couple can achieve a lasting happiness in their love, the earlier relationship doomed because of being based on deception and betrayal.

In Chievrefoil, rather than the emphasis on the responsibility of the individual to behave well in love, it is the notion of love as a destiny beyond human control that is stressed, a notion common to all versions of the Tristan legend, whether the potion appears as a literal or a symbolic force. In the lai, the unavoidability of the lovers' fate is indicated by Marie's summarising the whole of their story, including their deaths (Chievrefoil 5-10). In her reference to numerous other versions of the story, there is the implied assumption that her readers will be familiar with it<sup>42</sup>, hence her feeling no need to analyse the love between Tristan and Iseult or to



justify their adulterous relationship. She focuses simply on one brief episode of happiness in their love, it being clear that the couple cannot achieve permanent fulfilment in the relationship because of it being adulterous. In such circumstances the preciousness of snatched moments together is heightened, and Tristan is prepared to risk his life for the sake of this encounter with Iseult in the forest. Although it is known by the lovers to be ephemeral the happiness of the reunion is emphasised: -

Dedenz le bois celui trova  
Que plus amot que rien vivant:  
Entre eus meinent joie mut grant.  
A li parlat tut a leisir  
E ele li dit sun pleisir;

Chievrefoil 92-96.

As in other *lais* by Marie, the pleasure in love is felt equally by each of the lovers, the importance of reciprocity in love, thereby indicated yet again.

The extent to which Marie's view of love can be said to be personal appears from a consideration of other *lais* in which somewhat different standards are applied. In the Lai de l'Ombre the lovers appear in the roles of dompna and supplicant, the knight seeking by arguments and ingenuity to win the lady's love, despite her reservations<sup>43</sup>. The lady's objection to an adulterous relationship is based on the fact of her husband being a good and loving man, whom it would be wrong to betray: -

'Sire,' dist ele, 'n'est pas droiz  
que je ainme vos nē autrē home,  
que j'ai mon seignor molt preudome  
qui molt me sert bien et enneure.'

Ombre 492-95.

Her scruples may appear justified by the standards of Marie; for Jehan Renart they are ultimately of no more consequence than they are for the knight pressing his suit. The knight argues that the

circumstances of her marriage are irrelevant to their own possible relationship, which is entirely justified by the strength of his love for her (Ombre 496-505). This would seem to be the attitude upheld by the author, whose concern is in showing how his hero finally achieves the fulfilment in love to which he aspires. The lady's scruples are more dismissed than overcome; what convinces her of his worthiness to be loved by her is less his argumentation than the evidence of the sincerity of his love for her. This he proves by throwing his ring into the well. He explains that since she will not take it he is giving it to her reflection in the water, which next to her he loves best of all and which will never reject his gesture of love (Ombre 895-907). The happy outcome for the knight and his love is clearly felt by Jehan Renart to be well merited: -

Hé! Diex! si buer i asena  
a cele cortoisie fere!  
C'onques mes riens de son afere  
ne fu a la dame plesans.  
Toz reverdis et esprenans,  
li a geté ses eulz [es] siens;  
molt vient a honme de grant sens  
qui fet cortoisie au besoing.  
Ombre 908-15.

The basis of this relationship is manifestly different from anything that might apply in Marie's lais; the criterion being more refinement than moral justice.

Similarly in Tydorel there is no criticism levelled against the Queen when she becomes involved in an adulterous relationship with the knight from the Other World. She expresses no scruples about deceiving her husband, despite the fact that she loves and is loved by him (Tydorel 11-12). When the knight offers his love, she loves him immediately and only asks to know his name and where he has come from before granting him this love (Tydorel 69-74). There is, indeed, little analysis of the nature of the love between them; the

most that is offered is the knight's assurance of the faithfulness of his love for the lady: -

'Je vos ameré loiaument,'

Tydorel 65.

It is evident, nonetheless, that it is a loving and lasting relationship: -

Le chevaliers ques engendra  
a la roïne repera  
soventes foiz, car molt l'amot  
e ele lui, que plus ne pot.

Tydorel 191-94.

This is a relationship similar to that between Muldumarec and the lady in Yonec, but without any of the context of an unhappy marriage to justify the lady's infidelity<sup>44</sup>. The lack of obvious standards by which to judge the extent to which the lovers are deserving of the degree of fulfilment enjoyed in their relationship sets Tydorel apart from Marie's *lais*. One aspect of this relationship that relates it to Marie's notions of love is in the significance of destiny within it. Like Muldumarec, the knight in Tydorel comes to the lady specifically to find fulfilment in love with her. Endowed with gifts of prescience, he predicts the births of Tydorel and of a daughter, he warns also of how the relationship will end, powerless, nonetheless, to control this fate (Tydorel 111-32).

Without doing so explicitly, the author of Tydorel clearly condones this adulterous relationship without reservation. It is worth noting that part of the justification of the relationship lies in the role that it plays within the narrative as a whole, to explain the particular character of the real hero of the *lai*.

In Ignauze the narrative demands far more drastically a suspension of all conventional standards of behaviour if the reader is to

retain any sympathy for the hero<sup>45</sup>. That Ignaure is to be accepted as worthy of such sympathy - at least to an extent - is indicated by the emphasis on his personal qualities (see Chapter I). He is, however, fundamentally different from other lovers in the *lais* in his total disregard for conventional notions of fidelity in love. These, we have seen, are repeatedly stressed as being crucial as the basis of any good love relationship. They are also notions upheld by the ladies in this *lai*; Ignaure, however, has no scruples about having twelve mistresses simultaneously, deriving much pleasure from each of the relationships, which last for over a year (Ignaure 44-65). The ladies also derive much happiness from their relationships with Ignaure, although this is of necessity precarious as it is based on false premises: each lady believes herself to be Ignaure's only mistress.

Although it is made clear that the ladies are all married to knights of no inconsiderable merit (Ignaure 38-41), no reservations are expressed by Ignaure, by the ladies or by the narrator about the relationships in terms of their adulterous nature.

It must also be noted that it is not the fact in itself of Ignaure's having twelve mistresses that leads to his downfall. So long as the ladies remain in ignorance of this fact, both he and they are very happy in their love relationships. This Ignaure explains, is because if not faithful in love he is at least sincere: -

'Oïl, de toute ma poissanche,  
Et vous, et les autres trestoutes  
Ain ge bien: [trestoutes], sans doutes,  
Et lor solas, et lor delis.'

Ignaure 312-15.

Thus, he feels justified in his love, which is similar in quality to that of any other commendable lover in the *lais*, the difference

being that his love extends not to one lady but to twelve. It is the quality of his love that to a large extent justifies his behaviour by the terms of the lai as a whole.

Even when the ladies discover the truth of Ignaure's lack of fidelity, they continue to love him, despite their initial anger, just as he equally continues to love them. For him, because of this reciprocal love, there is no reason as to why the twelve relationships should not continue as before. He declares: -

'Ains amerai toutes encore  
Si que j'ai fait descî a ore.'

Ignaure 349-50.

It is evident that each of the ladies would also wish to continue to enjoy Ignaure's love, if their sense of propriety did not dictate otherwise (Eliduc 359-62).

Ignaure, although forced to abandon all but one of his mistresses, does not, in fact, suffer any loss of pleasure in love. To compensate for the loss of the other ladies, he visits his one remaining mistress far more often: -

Or sachiés bien k'il li couvint  
Aler maintes fois a s'amie.  
S'a toutes fust, n'i alast mie,  
Mais or n'a c'une seule voie.  
Souvent i va, ki ke le voie.

Ignaure 366-70.

It is clearly ironic that although it is Ignaure who, by the standards of conventional propriety, should be punished, he suffers not a jot. He continues to enjoy the same degree of personal fulfilment in love; all that has changed is in the circumstances of its being concentrated in one relationship now. Ignaure is, thus, never forced to acknowledge that his attitude to love is somewhat cavalier. There is further irony and distortion of normal standards

in that for as long as he had twelve mistresses he escaped detection from their husbands. This allows for the possibility that if the ladies had not discovered Ignaure's unfaithfulness and had not reacted so strongly against it he and they might have continued for much longer to enjoy their original relationships.

Although the adulterous relationship in the Lai de l'Epervier is far less unusual, there can perhaps be detected something of the same tone in the treatment of the relationship as we find in Ignaure. The relationship between Ventilas and the lady is one that might be treated with greater stricture in other lais. Ventilas is a close friend of the lady's husband; any adulterous relationship between Ventilas and the lady, thus, involves a betrayal of this bond of friendship as well as a betrayal of the marital bond. Ventilas is aware of this and initially restrains himself to seeking only an innocent relationship with the lady: -

Molt par li mostroit bel semblant,  
Envers li ot amor molt grant:  
Mès n'ert amor se bone non,  
Car fame estoit son compaignon.

Epervier 45-48.

The couple are able to derive some pleasure, albeit limited, from this relationship: Ventilas visits the lady often and they spend much time talking (Epervier 43-64). This closeness is sufficient to arouse the jealousy of the husband. It is his show of anger and jealousy, unwarranted in its excess, that justifies the couple in consummating their love, certainly in their own view and apparently in that of the author (Epervier 65-93). Henceforth they enjoy their love as fully as possible, without scruples: -

Il s'entramèrent molt andui:  
Cil ama li et èle lui;  
Et molt sovent a lui parloit.

Epervier 91-93.

Having established the grounds on which the relationship is based, the lai then focuses upon one episode in which the couple save their relationship from the risk of detection by the lady's husband, which is essential if the relationship is to have any chance of surviving (Epervier 94-224). This is achieved by the lady's ingenuity in inventing a story to explain to her husband why Ventilas has been in her house. Her ingenuity is presented with humour and with the author's approbation, the reader's sympathy directed more to the couple in their adultery than to the gulled husband.

In the Lai du Conseil the only direct references to the lady's being married appear briefly at the end of the lai at the time of her husband's death (Conseil 823-25). The ideals of love expounded through the lai comparable to those expressed by Andreas Capellanus in his Tractatus de Amore. The link with the Tractatus appears also in the self-conscious didacticism of the lai, and in its format which is a dialogue between a knight and a lady on the nature of good love. Even before the evidence of her marriage is stated, these features all indicate that the love in question is adulterous, for in the Tractatus it is one of the basic requisites of ideal love that it should be untrammelled by any consideration of marriage and of social obligation.

The lack of reference to the lady's marriage in the dialogue itself is evidence that the state of her conjugal relations are for her of no consequence in her consideration of an adulterous relationship. Certainly, although much concerned with defining ideal love, she expresses no scruples about such personal fulfilment being won through the deception of her husband. This notion of the irrelevance of marital infidelity to the assessment of the

worthiness of an adulterous relationship relate this lai in spirit at least to the Lai de l'Ombre. Similarly here the lady appears to an extent as a dompna figure, with the acknowledged right to grant or withhold her love according to her assessment of the worth of her suitors. The suitors have a degree of auto-determination as the criteria for the judgment of their worth is based on their qualities of character and on their conduct in love. They are, however, ultimately powerless, dependent on the favour of the lady. This inequality between the suitor and the lady is a fundamental feature of amour courtois. Such a concept of love as the basis of a relationship is clearly very different from the ideals of love to be found in many of Marie's lais, in which it is sincerity in love and depth of feeling that testify to the worthiness of the suitor to be loved. Here the criteria on which the lady founds her decision are slanted in a different direction, more intellectual than emotional: the conduct of the lover is all important.

It is the unknown knight who indicates those personal qualities that in particular determine the worthiness of a knight to be loved. It is to him that the lady has turned for a definition of ideal love, and it is he who appears within the context of the lai to express the author's own attitude. He says: -

'Certes, dame, li mains vilains,  
Li plus sages, li miex vaillanz,  
Por qu'il soit de fin cuer amanz.'  
Conseil 46-48.

He defines as a worthy lover a man who is discreet in his love (Conseil 130-59), who expresses his love by private means as in poems and letters (Conseil 168-81; 210-17). Such discretion is equally important in the lady if a relationship is to have any chance of survival (Conseil 384-401). The knight exalts good love: -



'De bone amor ne vient nus maus,'  
Conseil 231.

He also exalts womanhood in general as being able to provide men with love and happiness, warning the lady to take the implications of this role seriously (Conseil 285-321): -

'Doit fame estre de biau respons.  
La fame doit estre li pons  
De toute la joie du monde,  
Quar toz li biens nous en abonde.'  
Conseil 305-08.

He insists upon the need for a sense of honour in good love, warning the lady against seeking fulfilment in love with a scoundrel (Conseil 232-39), and advising her to seek out the company of honest people only (Conseil 364-82). Thus, good love worthy of fulfilment is determined as much by relations with others outside the relationship itself as by those between the couple. What is crucial within the relationship is the faithfulness and honesty with which the couple behave towards each other (Conseil 684-744). The knight says: -

'S'il est .I. hon coustumiers  
D'amer et n'aint qu'en .I. seul leu,  
Quant il out tant loisir et leu,  
Entr'aus .II. doit estre tout .I.,  
Solaz e ioie de commun,  
Sanz contredit, sanz couverture,  
Ce commande amors et droiture.'  
Conseil 686-92.

He repeatedly stresses the value of such love as a good to be sought out for the personal fulfilment to be derived from it: -

'Nule ioie ne s'apartient  
Au cuer qui fine amor maintient.'  
Conseil 659-60.

His defence of such love extends even to a justification of it against possible Christian scruples, arguing that the two are not necessarily irreconcilable. Thus he urges the lady to be a good Christian: -

'Toz iors aiez cuer et vouloir  
De dieu servir et honorer,'  
Conseil 362-63.

And he advises her that so long as an individual fully and honestly confesses and repents at the time of death, Christ will forgive all sins; this allows the individual to enjoy without restraint the pleasures of love in life (Conseil 504-61).

From this addition of a Christian dimension to this exaltation of courtly love, it would seem ~~that~~ the author was a cleric. It is certain that the values expounded by the knight are those to which the author subscribes, at least within the lai if not personally. The reader is to share in the lady's recognition of the knight's wisdom, and to perceive, as she does, that this is the man most worthy of being granted her love (Conseil 745-67): -

Tant le voit et sage et cortois  
Et bien parlant et bien apris  
Qu'ele a le sien cuer de tout mis  
En lui amer sanz repentance.

Conseil 748-51.

The union is clearly one that the author/narrator approves of, commenting on the wisdom of the knight in accepting the lady's love: -

Li chevaliers estoit senez  
Et sages et aperceuanz.

Conseil 768-69.

The adulterous relationship that ensues between them, based on the principles propounded through the dialogue, lasts a long time and provides both the knight and the lady with much happiness. It is stressed that this is possible because of the observance of the limitations implicit in any adulterous relationship (Conseil 783-822): -

Cele amor fu mout bien celee,  
Qu'onques n'en fu noise ne cris.

Conseil 816-17.

It is interesting that even an author so evidently subscribing to the conventions of courtly love, should ultimately introduce

marriage as the apogee of the lovers' relationship (Conseil 826-33). This provides them with a degree of unrestricted personal fulfilment in their love, unattainable even in their perfectly conducted adulterous relationship.

There are obvious similarities between the Lai du Conseil and Chaitivel, another lai which proposes - or appears to propose - an ideal of love related to that of Andres Capellanus<sup>46</sup>. For this reason, although it is not specifically stated, it seems valid to assume that the lady is married and that the relationship aspired to is adulterous. In Chaitivel, and in Conseil, we find a group of suitors aspiring to love fulfilment with the same woman. Here too the focus is upon the lady in her dilemma of choosing the one upon whom to bestow her favours. This is most definitely not the world of Ignauere, in which fulfilment in a plurality of love relationships is an alternative.

El nes pot mie tuz amer

Chaitivel 17.

It is evident that her choice must be based on the merits of the suitors, which are determined by social criteria - their chivalric qualities. Thus it appears that the deciding factor will be the respective performances of the four knights in the tournament; the one who excels will likely be the one to whom the lady will grant her love.

A l'assembler des chevaliers  
Voleit chescuns estre primiers  
De bien fere, si il peüst,  
Pur ceo qu'a la dame pleüst.

Chaitivel 63-66.

Such a presentation of love as primarily a reward for knightly skills granted by the lady as dompna is very different from the usual portrayal of good love in Marie's lais<sup>47</sup>. We note that

absence of such notions as reciprocity in love; love fulfilment as the fulfilment of destiny; the lack of emphasis on love as a profound emotion<sup>48</sup>. It seems to me, however, that to accept the ideals of courtly love as being those really expressed in Chaitivel is in fact to be deceived<sup>49</sup>.

Deeper analysis of the text reveals that such a perception of love corresponds with the attitudes of the lady, and not necessarily with those of the author. As in Conseil, it is the lady who is the assertive figure in Chaitivel. It is she who has the power to bring happiness in love to one of the suitors; it is she who determines the criteria by which they will be judged worthy of her. Both she and they are very aware of this. The suitors acquiesce fully to the situation, seeking to win her love by her terms: -

Par bel servir e par preier  
Quidot chescuns mieuz espleitier.  
Chaitivel 61-62.

Icil quatre la dame amoent  
E de bien fere se penoent;  
Pur li e pur s'amur avoir  
I meteit chescuns sun poeir.  
Chescuns par sei la requereit  
E tute sa peine i meteit;  
N'i ot celui ki ne quidast  
Que mieuz d'autre n'i espleitast.  
La dame ~~fa demut~~ grant sens:  
En respit mist e en purpens  
Pur saveir e pur demander  
Li queils sereit mieuz a amer.

Chaitivel 41-52 .

There is no reason to doubt that the love that prompts such efforts is not as sincere and as deeply felt as that of any other man in love in Marie's lais. There is, however, no suggestion that the quality of the suitors' love as such has any impact on the lady at all. Neither is there any suggestion of an emotional dimension to her own attitude<sup>50</sup>. Indeed what is focused upon is rather her 'grant sens' (Chaitivel 49). Her assessment of the merits of the

suitors functions at purely an intellectual level, and not at an emotional level. This is consistent with the general character portrait of her as a woman of education and refinement: -

Une dame ki mut valeit  
De beauté e d'enseignement  
E de tut bon affeitement .

Chaitivel 10-12 .

There is no indication of her possessing any of the sweetness of character or generosity that characterise those heroines for whom Marie most clearly feels sympathy and warmth, as can be seen from Chapter I.

The power of the lady in contrast with the impotence of the knights emerges from the passage previously quoted (Chaitivel 41-52), in which there is the juxtaposition of the description of the suitors' efforts and of the fact of the lady's choice. This highlights the lack of equivalence in position of the lady and that of the suitors. The contrast appears strikingly also from the difference of presentation. The four knights are repeatedly presented as a group, equivalent in their qualities and their aspirations (Chaitivel 32-110). They are not in the least bit individualised, with the exception of the one who survives the tournament, and even he scarcely at all. Any attempt at psychological insight is directed at the lady and her dilemma of which knight to choose. This setting of the lady in particular relief, distinct from the other characters, reinforces the impression of her as the directive figure in the lai, imposing her values upon the knights, to which they are forced to submit for any chance of fulfilment in love<sup>51</sup>.

That Marie feels less than sympathetic towards her heroine and her heroine's principles appears more clearly in the second part of the

lai, after three of the suitors have been killed. It is here that we see the extent to which the lady's vision of situations and her attitude towards the feelings of others is coloured by her own selfishness. The suffering of the surviving suitor has not occurred to her; she is conscious only of her own sorrows: -

'Voil que mis doels seit remembrez;  
De vus quatre ferai un lai  
E Quatre Dols le numerai.'

Chaitivel 202-04.

As well as her self-centredness, what we see here is that even to such a loss her response is largely at an intellectual level. It is as an educated woman that she proposes to use the experience as the basis of a lai, sublimating reality into art.

If Marie had subscribed to the lady's interpretation of events, surely she would have ended the lai here. Instead she uses the survivor to indicate how erroneous is the lady's perception of the circumstances (Chaitivel 207-28). That even the lady should accept his proposed title in preference to her own is indicative of how the reader should respond, with greater sympathy for him than for her. As the portrait of the lady is largely consistent through the lai it would seem valid to apply this balance of feeling against her beyond this episode.

Thus, quite subtly, Marie indicates that her own views on the standards by which an individual should be judged worthy of fulfilment in love do not necessarily coincide with those upheld by the lady. Certainly, in other lais by Marie the success of the individual in terms of chivalric prowess is of significance in determining his desirability to a woman (as in Milun and Eliduc), nowhere else, however, does this aspect acquire such importance. It

seems justified then to question the rightness of the lady's withholding her love from her suitors so haughtily and so dispassionately. It is possible, by extension, to question also standards that she applies in trying to decide which of them is worthy of her love. Thus, although the lady may feel honourable in her understanding of love and in her conduct towards the men who love her, she appears to be very far in both aspects from Marie's ideal, the evidence for this appearing both from an analysis of Chaitivel itself and from a comparison with the views on love expressed in Marie's other *lais*<sup>52</sup>.

What emerges from a study of adulterous relationships in the *lais* is that it is possible for couples to achieve much happiness within such relationships. This, however, is always dependent upon the appreciation of the restrictions implicit in such a relationship. Repeatedly the need for discretion is stressed; for it to have any chance of survival the love affair must be concealed, for as long as it involves adultery it can never be integrated into the open existence of the lovers in society.

##### 5. Other Forms of Extra-Marital Love

As indicated earlier in this chapter, a number of the love relationships that reach a state of absolute fulfilment in marriage are also shown in their pre-marital state. If there are often limitations on the degree of fulfilment attainable at this state of a relationship, in many cases the lovers are, nonetheless, able to derive a considerable amount of pleasure from their love. These limitations are largely implicit in the nature of the relationships: unsanctioned by marriage, they exist in opposition to social

acceptability, in the same way as adulterous relationships.

In Fresne, the pre-marital relationship between Fresne and Gurun affords both of them much happiness. Unlike most such relationships, this one is not concealed from society. Fresne lives with Gurun in his castle, where she is loved by him and honoured by his people almost as though she were his wife (Fresne 307-12). It is clear that the love between them is mutual. We are told of Gurun's feelings for Fresne: -

Mut la cheri e mut l'ama,  
Fresne 308

and of Fresne's behaviour towards Gurun: -

Sun seignur sert mut bonement  
Fresne 353 .

This is the love that will be the basis of their marriage also, but in itself it cannot lead to the marriage, and although their relationship at this stage continues for a long period to bring them happiness it cannot do so permanently. Even in these circumstances the irreconcilability of pre-marital love and the demands of society acts as a restriction upon the lovers' relationship. It is, thus, only possible to talk of partial fulfilment in their love.

This applies also to the relationship between Milun and the lady as it develops at the beginning of the lai. The young, unmarried lady is first inspired to love Milun because of his reputation as a great knight and it is she who takes the initiative in offering her love to him, without there being any suggestion of uncertainty or shyness in her: -

Ele ot o'i Milun nomer,  
Mut le cumençat a amer.  
Par sun message li manda  
Que, si li plest, el l'amera.  
Milun 25-28.

In Milun there is no hesitation either; he accepts her offer of love



and reciprocates with his own: -

Volentiers otriati l'amur:

Milun 31.

He promises to love her forever, a promise that he seals with the gift of his ring (Milun 29-46). Thus the relationship between them is established with great ease and rapidity, with neither Milun nor the lady feeling any need to question the quality of their love or the suitability of the relationship. Marie offers no criticism against them for this lack of soul searching.

The couple are able to derive much pleasure from their relationship, which is apparently bound by few material restrictions; it is evidently sexually consummated, leading as it does to the birth of a son (Milun 49-54): -

Tant i vint Milun, tant l'ama  
Que la dameisele enceinta.

Milun 53-54.

It is, nonetheless, a relationship that must be concealed from society, and the lady is fearful of the consequences if it were ever discovered<sup>53</sup> (Milun 58-64; 130-48): -

'Ja ne sui jeo mie pucele;  
A tuz jurs me's serai ancele.'

Milun 135-36.

Although her fears have not prevented her from freely giving up her virginity, they point to the awareness that the couple have of the vulnerability of their relationship, unsanctioned by marriage. The happiness to be found in their relationship at this stage is impermanent, however great it might be, as it can last only until the lady's marriage to another man.

In Deus Amanz also, the lovers are aware that the happiness they can derive from a relationship outside of marriage is limited. The

young man in particular resents these restrictions: -

Ne poeit mes suffrir l'enui.

Deus Amanz 86.

It is for this reason that they make such efforts towards marriage. Circumstances prevent them, however, from achieving such permanent union, and it is, thus, in their initial, unmarried relationship that they are able to enjoy their greatest amount of personal fulfilment. Although there is no evidence that the relationship is sexually consummated, the lovers are clearly able to spend much time in each other's company, despite the need for concealment: -

Ensemble parlerent sovent  
E s'entreamerent l'eaument  
E celerent a lur poeir,  
Qu'hum nes puist aperceveir.

Deus Amanz 71-74.

It is because of the quality of their love, as well as their conduct, that the lovers are evidently deserving of what happiness they can find in their relationship. As in Fresne and Milun (24-48), the reciprocity of their feelings is manifest (Deus Amanz 63-74). These factors do not, however, ensure the permanency of their happiness.

The degree of fulfilment in love that is accessible to Guillaume and the young girl in Vair Palefroi is far less than that enjoyed by any of the three previous couples. In the time before they are married, the girl is locked up inside her house; Guillaume can talk to her, but only standing outside the house, at the most they can kiss, but even that with difficulty (Vair Palefroi 186-216). Although they are often able to be together in this way, the pleasure they can derive from the relationship is tempered by the considerable restrictions upon it and by the fears of losing it completely if the girl is forced to marry another man. These cause them to long with increasing desperation for the permanent union of marriage.

In the Lai de l'Espine, on the other hand, there is a period of time during which the couple are able to be totally fulfilled in their love, without any sense of restraint. This is at the time, long before their eventual marriage, when their childhood friendship matures into a passion (Espine 31-89). Their closeness as a couple, the equivalence of their love for each other and their pleasure in each other's company are all clearly indicated. The two lovers are not differentiated, but are repeatedly referred to as a couple with the third person plural pronoun. Also stressed is their mutual dependence, their lives revolve exclusively around each other: -

en itel quise s'entramoient  
que li uns d'aus riens ne valoît,  
Espine 34-35.

Their absorption in each other as children develops naturally into an equally binding love, and there is specific emphasis on the role that Nature plays in this: -

Tantost con furent de l'aë  
k'en soi le pulst souffrir Nature,  
en bien amer misent lor cure;  
Espine 46-48.

une autre amors i herbeja  
que Naturë i aporta  
Espine 51-52.

Thus, again we find the notion of fulfilment in love allied to destiny. The extent to which this relationship is fulfilled is left in no doubt: -

tout i ont mise lor entente  
de lor deduit a çou mener:  
en iax baisier e acoler.  
Espine 54-56.

Mout s'entramoient loiaument;  
Espine 63.

That such absolute fulfilment in love is possible at this stage in their relationship is because they have no awareness of any restrictions that might be imposed upon them; they are not

restrained in their love by any fears of being discovered. This does not, however, signify that this relationship is less vulnerable than any other pre-marital relationship from the active opposition of society. Indeed such happiness in their love can only last for so long as this relationship remains undiscovered by their families and by the rest of society.

There are very obvious similarities between this relationship between young children growing into adults and that of Píramus and Tisbé. Píramus and Tisbé are also able for a period to enjoy each other's company almost without restraint. This is while they are still children and are able to spend their days in games together, separating at night (Píramus et Tisbé 47-85). As in Espine, this is deeper than a childhood friendship; they are bound already by a love over which they have no control. Here the power of love as destiny is made explicit through their personification of love: -

Ainçois qu'il eüssent set ans  
Toucha Amours les deus enfans

Píramus et Tisbé 13-14.

Their relationship is, however, curtailed at a far earlier stage than in Espine, before it has fully a chance to develop into a self-conscious adult love. Separated by their parents, they nonetheless achieve some means of communication, albeit limited. This is made possible by their discovery of a chink in the partition wall between the two palaces (Píramus et Tisbé 313-40). Through this they can talk and, by pressing an eye to it, they can see each other (Píramus et Tisbé 362-63). This is a situation far less desirable than the freedom they were used to enjoying initially, and they greatly lament their plight of having so little chance of being totally fulfilled in their love for each other. Yet even this limited degree of contact can provide them with some solace, as

Tisbé says: -

'Plus a loisir porrons parler  
Et li uns l'autre conforter.'

Piramus et Tisbé 400-01.

It also allows them to make plans to be fully reunited in love (Piramus et Tisbé 568-89).

Their situation can be compared with that of the lovers in Laustic, whose relationship is restricted to secret conversations. Yet, whereas the adulterous lovers find much happiness in these, Piramus and Tisbé are more aware of their suffering in love. Love they perceive not as a happy fate but doom. Even at the beginning, when they are able to be together almost all the time, what is noted as much as their joy in this is the unhappiness that separation in the evening causes them: -

Car li dessevrers lor est maulz.

Piramus et Tisbé 60.

Despite their freedom of contact their happiness in love is not absolute even at this stage. The way in which love is seen to assert its power is by inflicting an arrow wound, a conventional notion, clearly derived from the Ovidian version of the story on which the French writer has based his own. Repeatedly what is emphasised is the unremitting suffering caused by this (Piramus et Tisbé 23-46). When after a period of complete separation, the couple are able to talk again through the chink in the wall and it would seem that Venus is favouring their love, their fears of permanent separation are dominant, preventing them from taking pleasure from this opportunity. Thus Piramus says: -

'Prions orendroit de ça jus  
Que nos aït dame Venus  
Que nulz ne truisse cest pertus.'  
Li jovenciaus plaint et souspire.

Piramus et Tisbé 496-99.

Tisbé also repeatedly stresses the anguish that love causes her, replying in this instance to Piramus: -

'Amors m'ocit et me travaille.  
Diex grans,  
Quels ire est ce, quels maltalans  
Que as a moi de si lonc tans?'

Piramus et Tisbé 521-24.

While praying to the gods as the only hope for achieving fulfilment in love, they continue to believe that the gods are against them and that their love signifies their doom. The day before they are due to be reunited in the evening is marked by this duality in their attitude to love, any joyful anticipation is shadowed by anxiety: -

Et devisent en lor corage  
Lor duel, lor mort et lor damage.  
Il ont andui joie et dolour,

Piramus et Tisbé 618-20.

They may hope for absolute fulfilment in their love, but they do not appear to expect that it will be possible, and their negative attitude prevents them from finding any happiness in their love. A further dimension affecting their attitude towards love is the fear that it might not be worthy of fulfilment because of being contrary to reason. It is Tisbé in particular who is conscious of this (Piramus et Tisbé 221-306). She attempts to repress her feelings of love for Piramus because she fears them to be contrary to her honour. She says to herself: -

'Garde Raison qui t'est contraire!  
Ne te chaille entor toi atraire  
Corage  
Par quoi tu faces tel otrage,  
Car onc feme de ton lignage  
Ne fu reprise de putage.'

Piramus et Tisbé 238-43.

Reason, however, has no power over love. It is the power of love that asserts itself inexorably in allowing the lovers no real alternative but to make their desperate attempt at the end at being united, whatever the dangers.

Mes toutes ores vaint Amour;  
Sens ne raison nes puet retraire  
De ce qu'il ont empris a faire.

Piramus et Tisbé 621-23.

Thus love in Piramus et Tisbé is portrayed almost as an evil genius, certainly a tragic one, so overwhelming those it afflicts that it obliterates all other concerns. Happiness can be hoped for only in unrestricted fulfilment of this love; partial fulfilment can provide the lovers with little more contentment than complete separation. The lovers become as one in the obsessive passion, equally in love, equally dependent upon the other, unable to find any form of personal fulfilment outside of this relationship. These factors are particularly emphasised in Piramus et Tisbé by the way in which the two young lovers express their feelings. This is by two pairs of monologues (Piramus et Tisbé 145-215; 216-312 ; 407-501; 502-89). Within each pair, the monologues act as pendants to each other. In both cases, Piramus speaks first, expressing the depth of his love for Tisbé, his anguish, his fears; he prays to the gods for succour. In her monologues, Tisbé expresses the same sentiments, she too prays to the gods. At the end of his first monologue, Piramus falls into a swoon (Piramus et Tisbé 204-07): at the end of her first monologue, so too does Tisbé (Piramus et Tisbé 307). A close textual analysis of the monologues reveal the extent to which they function as parallels, although in Tisbé's first monologue there is the added debate of love versus reason. There can be no doubt as to the equivalence of the love between them: there is no need for one to woo the other, both, as they realise, must simply submit to their fate.

In the Lai d'Aristote, the opposition between love and reason is also featured, although here treated in a humorous way. Aristote,

who reproaches Alixandre for his indulgence in love as being contrary to reason, comes to represent reason itself, in opposition to Alixandre's mistress, who represents love. The author makes it explicitly clear that his position is on the side of love: -

Bien est Amors et sire et mestre,  
Que du monde le plus poissant  
Fait si humble et obeïssant  
Qu'il ne prent nul conroi de lui,  
Ainz obeïst tot a autrui.  
C'est droiz, qu'Amors est de tel pris,  
Aristote 102-07.

It is evident that he favours the couple in the full enjoyment of their love for each other, such as they have the beginning of the lai, before the intervention of Aristote (Aristote 115-36). Alixandre may be convinced temporarily by Aristote's criticisms of his relationship with his mistress (Aristote 153-79), but Aristote is not given the last word on the subject. The author, with much light-heartedness, shows Alixandre's mistress exerting her charms on Aristote in order to make a fool of him, and, thereby, to safeguard her own relationship with Alixandre. By her singing she is able to reduce Aristote to such a level of besottedness that he agrees to get down on all fours and be ridden by her like a donkey (Aristote 410-61). This 'come-uppance' of Aristote serves to prove the power that love has over reason, as Aristote is forced to acknowledge, albeit sheepishly: -

'Ce que g'ai apris et leü  
M'a Amors desfait en [une] eure!  
Aristote 483-84.

The nature of the story, and the style in which it is presented, preclude any attempts to read any serious didactic intention into this lai. The reader can only laugh and wish Alixandre and his mistress well in their relationship, without analysing too deeply the grounds on which Aristote's initial arguments are based.



In Lanval, in contrast, the relationship between love and the pressures and the demands of society is confronted with a great deal of seriousness. The two aspects are closely intertwined, and as we follow Lanval through different forms of personal fulfilment, we follow him also in an evolution in his attitude towards social fulfilment.

He first discovers fulfilment in love at a time when he is unable to find fulfilment in society<sup>54</sup>. He appears at this time a passive figure, both in his relations with society and in his introduction to love. Having left the city aimlessly, he is approached by two maidens who take him to the lady. It is made clear that it is the lady who takes the initiative here, as the maidens tell Lanval: -

'Ele nus enveie pur vus,'

Lanval 73.

The specificity of her intention to offer her love to Lanval is demonstrated by her own first words to him: -

'Pur vus vinc jeo fors de ma tere:  
De luinz vus sui venue quere!  
Se vus estes pruz e curteis,  
Emperere ne quens ne reis  
N'ot unkes tant jole ne bien,  
Kar jo vus aim sur tute rien.'

Lanval 111-16.

She, thus, from the very beginning, indicates the potential for happiness that exists for Lanval within her love. Lanval immediately falls in love with her and, without hesitating, accepts her offer of love. Immediately the love between them is consummated: -

Quant la meschine o'i parler  
Celui ki tant la peot amer,  
'S'amur e sun cors li otreie.  
Ore est Lanval en dreite veie!

Lanval 131-34.

From the last line of this passage, we can adduce Marie's own

approval for this relationship, which provides Lanval with the ease and happiness that were inaccessible to him in society. This fulfilment in love appears, then, as in a sense a compensation for the injustice of King Arthur. This is a parallel with the situation in Yonec, in which Muldumarec arrives to bring the lady the love and happiness that have been missing in her life. We have already seen the traits by which the lady in Lanval can be identified as being from the Other World.

Thus we can see that the opposition between the lady and Arthur in their relations with Lanval, represents also an opposition between love and feudal society, between the Other World and the Real World.

Enjoyment of love with the lady does not shake Lanval out of his passivity, and he consents without protestation when she tells him that he will not be able to stay with her permanently (Lanval 159-94). He does not seem, at this stage, to aspire even to a permanent relationship with the lady, and derives much happiness from the manner in which the relationship develops in the aftermath of this first idyllic encounter. Certainly he is able to spend much time with the lady: -

Mut ot Lanval joie e deduit:  
U seit par jur u seit par nuit,  
S'amie peot veeir sovent,  
Tut est a sun comandement.

Lanval 215-18.

Yet all the time that he remains in society there are necessarily restrictions on the amount of time he can in fact be with her. His love relationship can be no more integrated into his social existence than can be any other extra-marital relationship, even less than many. The lady has indeed stressed the importance of secrecy in their relationship: Lanval can hope to continue to enjoy

it only so long as he reveals its existence to no-one (Lanval 143-50).

If for a time Lanval achieves a balance between his desire for fulfilment in society and fulfilment in love (Lanval 201-18), this does not last for long. By the time of the Midsummer festivities (Lanval having first met the lady shortly after Whitsun (Lanval 11)), Lanval is resentful of the demands of society that prevent him from being with his mistress as much as he would wish (Lanval 219-58). The irony of this is that his increased appreciation of the importance for him of fulfilment coincides with his being offered a greater chance of achieving the social fulfilment to which he previously aspired. Lanval discovers now how little he truly finds pleasure in such amusements of court life in contrast to the delights of his mistress's company (Lanval 253-56). Fulfilment in love is now becoming a priority for him. Greater fulfilment in his relationship with the fairy is, however, impossible so long as he remains within the society of Arthur's court. It is from the time of Lanval's confrontation with the Queen that the possibility of a continued balance between social and personal fulfilment is lost. Henceforth, the irreconcilability of society and unmarried love, the Real World and the Other World, asserts itself, with the consequences that Lanval ultimately has to choose between the two.

The contrast that exists between the Queen and the fairy enhances the value of the fairy's love. After the unfortunate encounter with the Queen, Lanval fully realises that his relationship with his mistress is of greatest importance to him. However willing Arthur is at the end of the lai to acquit Lanval and to recognise his rights in the court, Lanval has no interest in being socially

integrated (Lanval 624-29). Although the lady has come to the court to ensure that Lanval is acquitted, she gives no indication of still loving him, and clearly has no intention of remaining there (Lanval 548-632). The alternatives appear clearly then to Lanval: either he stays within Arthur's court, with every chance of social fulfilment, or takes a risk, following the fairy with the hope - but no certainty - of fulfilment in love<sup>55</sup>. Lanval does not hesitate. Finally he is no longer passive, but takes his decision and immediately acts upon it, jumping on to the lady's horse behind her to ride off with her to Avalun (Lanval 633-46). The force of this self assertion is expressed most strongly in the line: -

De plain eslais Lanval sailli!

Lanval 640.

This reveals a dynamism and a sense of commitment that have previously been absent from Lanval's involvement in both social and personal relationships. This contrast with his earlier behaviour sets this decisiveness into particular relief, as evidence of his having attained an emotional maturity in which there is no place for equivocation.

In Graelent, also, only a partial degree of fulfilment in love is accessible to the hero while he stays within the courtly society of the Real World. Here too, the opposition between the Real World and the Other World is expressed also in an opposition between society and love. The love and happiness, that the fairy offers Graelent at the time of their first meeting, appear as a compensation of the unhappiness suffered by Graelent in society.

The actual circumstances of this first meeting are somewhat different from those of the encounter of Lanval with the fairy. It

appears to be Graelent who takes the initiative, catching sight of her bathing without her being aware of him (Graelent 210-82). He takes her clothes to force her to come out of the water and rapes her. She nevertheless reveals herself to be in the same mould as Muldumarec, as Tydorel's father and as the fairy in Lanval, as a being from the Other World who has come specifically to offer her love. She says to Graelent: -

'por vous ving jou a la fontainne,'  
Graelent 315.

Thus what seemed to be an act of auto-determination by Graelent now appears rather to be his unwitting fulfilment of a destiny over which he has no control. There is a slackness of writing in this passage, suggesting a certain confusion in the author's mind. It would appear the he first envisaged a relationship between Graelent and the lady based on the tradition of the swan-maiden. He then shifted his perception of the relationship and of the respective roles of the two characters within it, aligning it more with that in Lanval. It is impossible to surmise whether these contradictions existed already in his source or whether they result from the author's own attempt at combining two different traditions<sup>56</sup>.

In any case, the relationship evidently involves love on both sides, a love that is sexually consummated, but whose basis is not solely sexual. Both Graelent and the fairy express their commitment to the continuation of the relationship beyond the initial encounter, pledging sincerity and faithfulness in love. Graelent offers his love: -

si li otroit sa druerie,  
e il fera de li s'amie,  
loialment e bien l'amera,  
jamais de li ne partira.

Graelent 287-90.

The fairy says in response: -

'ge vous amerai vraiment,'

Graelent 301.

There is, however, no question at this stage of Graelent's remaining with his mistress. As in Lanval, the fairy mistress asserts her authority, sending Graelent away, although their relationship will continue (Graelent 300-25). She also states the conditions which must be observed for this continuation of their love, that Graelent should never reveal its existence to anyone (Graelent 302-04; 318-20). As she predicts the relationship provides Graelent with much happiness: -

Or a Graelens boine vie  
e molt grant joie de s'amie.

Graelent 405-06.

To his life as a knight at the court of the King of Brittany has been added a dimension of personal fulfilment that has previously been lacking. There are, however, inevitable restrictions on the extent to which he can enjoy this love relationship, existing as it does in an uneasy balance with his existence within the court, the two sides of his life kept necessarily in isolation from each other. The terms by which the relationship with the lady exists, imposed upon Graelent by the lady, mean that it can never be integrated into society. Graelent can ultimately, therefore, achieve permanent and unrestricted fulfilment in his love only outside of society. This Graelent comes to realise at the end of the lai, by which time he has come to appreciate that fulfilment in love is of primordial importance for him, and that he would rather be dead than unloved by his mistress (Graelent 506-16).

This self-awareness and his appreciation of the preciousness of her love are what prompt him to leave the court, even though, having

been acquitted in the trial, he has every chance of being restored to his original position in the King's favour (Graelent 631-38). As with Lanval, it is with hope but not certainty that Graelent chases after his mistress, asserting his love for her even though she remains silent: -

Graelens monte e vait après  
par mi le vile a grant eslés;  
tozjors li va merci criant,  
el ne respont ne tant ne quant.

Graelent 649-52.

Graelent's commitment to love is tested to the extreme. It is proof beyond doubt of his desperation to be united forever with his mistress that he risks death even, plunging into the perilous river in his pursuit of her into the Other World (Graelent 674-8). This is no shallow gesture, as he does indeed almost die for the sake of his love: -

Graelens fu pres de noier,

Graelent 680 .

The lady does, however, finally prove herself to be merciful to the man who so evidently loves her. She saves him from drowning, wraps him up in her own cloak and takes him to her own country (Graelent 698-710). Although it is not stated, it seems safe to assume from this that Graelent does achieve the absolute fulfilment in love to which he has aspired, and for which he has abandoned his own society.

The same or similar tradition of the love between a mortal and a being from the Other World is featured in Guingamor. There are obvious similarities between Graelent and Guingamor in the circumstances of the initial encounter between the hero and the fairy. Here too, Guingamor appears to take the initiative, taking the fairy's clothes after he had discovered her bathing (Guingamor 427-43). Although he is attracted by her charms and wants to make

love to her, for him the priority is to capture the white boar, which will enable him to return to the King's court. Social fulfilment is of greater importance to him than the opportunity of sexual gratification (Guingamor 457-62). It is only when the fairy promises to provide him with the boar that he seriously considers loving her, not simply loving her. He then offers her his love, asking for it to be reciprocated (Guingamor 488-96). The author makes clear his support for such a relationship: -

Cele fu sage et bien aprise,  
Guingamor respont en tel guise  
qu'ele l'amera volentiers,  
dont ot joie li chevaliers.  
Puis que l'amor fu ostroiee,  
acolee l'a et besiee.

Guingamor 497-502.

In Guingamor's case, there is no need for him to attempt to maintain a balance between social and personal fulfilment. He goes immediately with the lady to her castle in the Other World, and stays there with much pleasure for three hundred years (Guingamor 503-40). He has not realised, however, that such fulfilment in love is achieved only at the cost of abandoning forever any chance of fulfilment in his uncle's court in the Real World. His social reputation remains important to him, as evidenced by his determination to return to the Real World. Although he says that after this one visit he will come back to his mistress, his commitment to fulfilment in love is not to the exclusion of all other concerns (Guingamor 522-38; 545-63). This makes of him a somewhat different hero from either Lanval or Graellent.

If Guingamor does finally enjoy a permanent relationship with his mistress, it is not because of any act of concerted effort by him, but is rather dependent upon the continued commitment of the lady in the relationship. It is she who, when Guingamor insists on going to



the Real World, advises him on what conditions to observe if he wishes to return to her (Guingamor 564-70). When he fails to observe this condition, eating three apples, and nearly dies as a result, it is two maidens from the Other World who come to take him back with them (Guingamor 635-67). Guingamor's own commitment to the love is, thus, never tested in the same way as that of Lanval and Graellent. He appears ultimately as a passive figure, carried away by the fairy maidens. It can be assumed that he is returned to his fairy mistress and to the enjoyment of her love, but as in Lanval and Graelent, his ultimate fate in this respect is left vague.

The author of Desiré was clearly working with the knowledge, either direct or indirect, of the same Celtic traditions as the authors of the three previous lays. He, however, leaves no such uncertainty at the end of his story, introducing a Christian dimension to the relationship between Desiré and the fairy which leads it to a culmination in marriage.

Desiré first discovers love through his encounter with a young maiden in the woods. His attempts at taking the initiative by seducing her forcibly are rejected by her as she advises him to offer his love to the lady she serves (Desiré 133-96); and it is with humility that Desiré approaches the lady herself. He asks for her love, a love that is immediately granted to him and immediately consummated (Desiré 197-220): -

Ottriee est la druerie;  
il fait de li cum de s'amie.

Desiré 219-220.

There can be no suggestion in this case the fulfilment in love comes to him in compensation of a lack of social fulfilment. The love relationship appears, nonetheless, in opposition to society. In

allowing himself to be tempted by the pleasures of love, Desiré is distracted from his initial intention to visit the hermit (Desiré 125-36); more specifically, then the opposition is fundamental to the lai as a whole, with an emphasis on an attempt at reconciling these two apparent opposites.

Despite this lapse towards the hermit, Desiré has no thought at this stage of renouncing social fulfilment for the sake of love. For a period he maintains a dual existence, living in his own chivalric society but also finding much pleasure in his relationship with the fairy: -

ensemble parolent sovent,  
tant s'entreamerent lungement  
kë un fiz e une file en out;

Desiré 255-57.

Desiré is, thus, clearly able to enjoy his love relationship with little restriction. This is possible, however, only for so long as he conceals it from society, the conditions imposed upon him by his mistress; there can be no convergence of the two forms of existence.

In this period Desiré also retains scruples of Christian morality, based on the conventional teaching of the Church. These cause him to question the rightness of enjoying such a love relationship, unsanctified by marriage. It is because he lacks this certainty and ultimate commitment to the love between him and the fairy that he goes to the hermit (Desiré 273-80).

It is only after this, when it seems to him that he has forever forfeited his chance of fulfilment in love that he discovers just how vital it is for him, hence his joy when the fairy comes to him during his illness: -

Illa conuit e esgarda;  
de la joie què il en a

Desiré 361-62.

The fairy's commitment to their love is absolute, as she asserts both in her actual words to Desiré, and through the fact of her coming to him. Her coming to him is significant less as a development in their relationship than as a vindication of the nature of the relationship that they have enjoyed. She confronts the conventional opposition of extra-marital love and the teaching of the Church, claiming that her relationship with Desiré, although not sanctioned by marriage, was not a great sin because it involved no betrayal of any other person: -

'Ço ne fu pas si grant pecc<sup>h</sup>ez;  
jo ne fu unques espusee,  
ne fiancee ne juree,  
ne tu femme espusee n'as,  
unques nule n'en afias!

Desiré 374-78.

Much of her argument in the defence of the relationship rests on the contrast between it and adulterous relationships, which are far more seriously sinful. The fairy adds force to her vindication of their love by going to church and taking Holy Communion as proof of her own Christian piety (Desiré 409-13). Yet the justification of this love by the terms of Christian morality is not sufficient to ensure absolute fulfilment in it. This can be achieved only by the sanctioning of the relationship by the King and by the Church. Furthermore, like Lanval and Graellent, Desiré has to make the ultimate commitment to the love relationship by renouncing his chances of social fulfilment.

In a world very different from this, in which fairy love and Christian morality are reconciled, we find desire for fulfilment in love reduced to simple lust. This is the message to be derived from

Lecheor, a lai which stands apart from all others in its exceptionally base view of the significance of love (Lecheor 81-90)<sup>57</sup>.

Although the Arthurian court as presented in the lais of Cor and Mantel is far less decadent in its values than that featured in Lecheor, it is, nonetheless, revealed to be of a certain moral laxity<sup>58</sup>. In the Mantel, all the ladies, with a single exception, are proven to be unfaithful in love. Until having to submit publicly to the chastity test of the cloak, they have been able to conceal their duplicity in love. Only Caradoc's mistress is true and faithful in her love (Mantel 833-71), a love which is praised by the young man who has presented the cloak as a challenge to the court. The test provides Caradoc with a certainty about her love that he has not had previously, as is evident from his fears expressed before she tries on the cloak. He has affirmed his own love for her, but has stated that he would rather be uncertain as to her faithfulness than to lose the relationship completely because of the knowledge of her unfaithfulness (Mantel 794-818). He stresses the importance that fulfilment in love has for him: -

'car qui sa bone amie pert  
molt a perdu, ce m'est avis.'

Mantel 804-05.

In the Lai du Cor, there is the nuance that the failure to drink from the horn does not necessarily prove that a man is betrayed in his love, but possibly only that he is fearful of betrayal. The failure of all but one of the men to drink from the horn without spilling the wine nonetheless indicates how far from ideal are the love relationships maintained at Arthur's court. The exception is Caradoc, who drinks from the horn with absolute confidence in the quality of the love between him and his wife, a confidence that is

vindicated. Their relationship is thus proven to be founded upon love, trust and loyalty, as should ideally be the case (Cor 487-75).

Although praising this love between Caradoc and his wife, Arthur proves himself ultimately tolerant of the possibility of being cuckolded by his own wife. His initial anger evaporates when he realises that nearly all the other men at his court are, or appear to be in, in the same situation. His love for his wife remains, transcending any suspicions (Cor 457-86): -

Li rois la regarda  
mout bel (la) li sembla.  
Il la ad vers soy sache[e]  
si la ad treis fez(e) beisse[e].  
Cor 477-80.

His view is one subscribed to by the other knights, whose love relationships have also been revealed to be less than perfect. The decadence of court morals revealed by the test of the horn is presented more as a joke than as a cause for concern. This reality is accepted and the relationships continue: -

Les femmes remenerent  
cil ki plus les amerent.  
Cor 581-82.

Although the standards of good love are upheld through the example of Caradoc and his wife, the looseness in the morals of the rest of the court is not expressly condemned. This reveals a tolerance not only in the court society but also in the author's own attitude to love. Contentment in a love relationship is not exclusively reserved for those who are faithful and trusting in love, but can be enjoyed by those who are less than perfect.

What is interesting in all of these lais, Lecheor, Mantel, Cor, is the way in which the characters are focused upon less as individuals than as members of a group. This is true even of such distinctive

Arthurian figures as Arthur, Gauvain and Keu, who are presented in terms consistent with conventional characterisation. As a consequence the manner in which love relationships are conducted is shown to be as revealing of the morals of a whole society as of those of individuals.

This emerges also from the Lai du Trot, the whole focus of which is directed at asserting the importance of fulfilment in love. It is a frankly didactic lai, with little attempt at story telling, expressing its lesson by means of the contrast between the fate of those ladies who have loved well and those who have failed to do so. This contrast is evident from appearances and is particularly stressed. The first group of ladies met by Lorois are accompanied by their lovers and appear happy and blessed by fortune in every way (Trot 79-96; 114-16): -

Entr'eus n'en avoit point d'envie,  
car cascuns i avoit s'amie,  
si se deduisoit sans anui,  
ces a celui, cele a cestui;  
li un baisent, li autre acolent,  
e de tex i a ki parolent  
d'amors e de chevalerie.  
La ot molt delitouse vie.

Trot 127-34.

S'aloient grant joie menant

Trot 145.

This joyful existence in fulfilled love is the consequence of their having maintained a positive attitude towards love, as is made explicit by one of the ladies in the second group who has realised the error of her ways: -

'Celes Ki la devant s'en vont  
entr'eles si grant joie font,  
car cascune solonc lui a  
l'omme el monde que plus ama;  
si le puet tot a son plaisir  
baisier, acoler e sentir.  
Ce sont celes qui en lor vie  
ont Amor loialment servie

ki les amoient durement;  
bien fisent son commandement.  
Or lor en rent le guerredon  
Amors, k'il n'ont se joie non.  
Certes, eles sont a grant aise,  
eles n'ont riens qui lor desplaie,  
Trot 241-54.

The happiness of the ladies of the first group appears, then, as a just reward for their observance of the laws of love. We note that there is no individualisation of the ladies; this emphasises the lesson to be drawn from their experiences is of general relevance: that an appreciation of the value of love will be rewarded invariably with fulfilment in love. Accordingly Lorois takes the lesson not only for his own benefit, but also for the benefit of the rest of the court to which he returns at the end of the lai (Trot 289-302).

In those other lais - the majority - in which the focus is upon the experiences in love of an individual couple, the consequences of the relationship extend nonetheless to a social context. It is rare for the love affair of an individual to be presented without some reference to the social implications of it.

There are in the lais two types of extra-marital (non-adulterous) relationship, those in which the lovers can achieve absolute fulfilment in their love and those in which such fulfilment as can be enjoyed is inevitably limited.

Relationships of the latter variety are the more common; the restrictions upon them due to their vulnerability to social pressures. The opposition of society, or of particular members of society, is in some cases materialised, as in Vair Palefroi, in which the lovers can only talk through a window because of the

father's imprisonment of his daughter. More often the actual restraints are self-imposed by the lovers, in consequence of their awareness of the opposition of society to such love and of their fear of discovery. Ironically, it is those lovers most aware of the restrictions implicit in such relationships, who are most likely to enjoy fulfilment in love for a prolonged period without the opposition of society affecting them directly. The necessity of concealing their love from society prevents them, nonetheless, from achieving the stability and permanency in their relationship that is to be found in marriage.

A number of love relationships, however, despite remaining unsanctioned by marriage, do succeed in escaping from the restrictions imposed by society. In these the ideal of absolute fulfilment in love is possible, it can be achieved, however, only at the cost of renouncing any possibility of social fulfilment. It is in order to enjoy such permanent and unrestricted fulfilment in love that the lovers leave the society of the Real World behind them forever, as in Lanval, Graelent and Guingamor.

#### 6. Love Transcending Death

In a number of love relationships, transcendence of restrictions imposed upon them is possible only through death. It is only by such means that the lovers can achieve absolute union and fulfilment in love<sup>59</sup>.

This is the case for the young couple in Piramus et Tisbé, for whom life without love is worthless. Death comes to them at the time when they are making their one desperate effort to be reunited in



life, by escaping from their fathers' houses. Because of the tragic misunderstanding, caused by Piramus's discovery of Tisbé's bloodied wimple, each of the lovers is equally tested by the dilemma of whether life is possible after the death of the other. When Piramus finds the wimple, he assumes that Tisbé has been killed by the lion. For him, life without hope of love is inconceivable, so vital to him is his relationship with Tisbé. He laments: -

'Quant ele est morte et ne sui morz;  
Ne sai quel duel me soit plus forz.  
La mort est mes mieudres conforz.'

Piramus et Tisbé 738-44.

Consequently, he chooses to kill himself, stabbing himself with his sword (Piramus et Tisbé 777-92). Ironically when Piramus commits suicide, Tisbé is still alive; she discovers him dying and responds to this situation in the same way that Piramus responded to her apparent death. No more than for him is there any alternative that is imaginable to her other than death. She declares: -

'Con faible amor, con povre foi  
Avroie,  
Amis, se je ne vous sivoie,  
S'a court terme ne m'ocioie.'

Piramus et Tisbé 847-50.

It is she who stresses the significance of death as a means of being united finally with Piramus: -

'Mors nos joindra, ce m'est avis.'

Piramus et Tisbé 876.

This union will be the act of dying itself: -

'S'en avra s'ame grant confort  
S'andui morromes d'une mort.'

Piramus et Tisbé 871-72.

Thus, Tisbé stabs herself with the same sword that Piramus has used against himself, and they die in each other's arms, their lips against each other's lips. This is a greater physical union than they have enjoyed at any point in their lives (Piramus et Tisbé 890-921). It is as she has intended their death to be: -

'Quant ambedeus nous trouverez  
Ensemble mors et acolez!'

Piramus et Tisbé 882-83.

Tisbé's desire is that their union should extend beyond the moment of death, to be permanent: -

'Seviaus  
Que nous contiengne uns seulz tombiaux,  
Andeus nous reçoive uns vessiaux!'

Piramus et Tisbé 887-89.

The lai ends, however, without indicating whether her wish for them to be buried together is carried out.

Another pair of lovers who die at the very moment of coming closest to fulfilment in their love at the young hero and heroine of Deus Amanz. Although their deaths are not suicide, there are obvious similarities in the two tragic endings<sup>60</sup>. The young man dies first, from exhaustion, having carried the girl up the hill without drinking the strength-giving potion. It is at the very moment of his success, which should win him the girl's hand in marriage, that he collapses and dies (Deus Amanz 213-21). So great is the girl's anguish at the death of her suitor, that she dies too, holding him in her arms and kissing him (Deus Amanz 230-38). After the physical union of their death, the lovers are buried together: -

Sarcu de marbre firent quere,  
Les deus enfanz unt mis dedenz;

Deus Amanz 246-47.

Thus they are assured of permanent union, sanctioned by all the King's people who bury them (Deus Amanz 248-50). In this way their love is publicly acknowledged and celebrated by society in a way it never was while they were alive<sup>61</sup>.

The death of Narcisus and Dané in Narcisus serves a somewhat different role, marking not so much the ultimate consummation of an

already existing relationship as the birth of it. By the time that Narcissus realises that it is impossible for him to achieve fulfilment in the love to which he has aspired, it being directed at himself, it is too late for him to escape his fate, which is to die because of it<sup>62</sup>. It is at this point that he finally comes to value the love that Dané has offered him throughout, and to wish that he had been able to reciprocate with his love (Narcissus 941-71). Dané comes to him at this time, still unwavering in her love for him. It is now that he is dying that she is able to come closest to a physical union with him, for now, finally, it is not with total indifference that he greets her<sup>63</sup>: -

Les bras li tent, les levres muet,  
Les eus ovre; si com il puet,  
Sanblant li fait que se repent.

Narcissus 981-83.

The possibility of union in life is lost forever, but she lies down next to him to die, her arms around him, finally able to express her love physically: -

Ele le baise, ele le tient;  
Ele se pasme, puis revient;  
Ele l'acole, ele l'enbrace;  
Baise les eus, baise la face.

Narcissus 987-90.

When Narcissus is dead, Dané chooses death also, because life without love holds no attraction for her. She prays for death: -

'Lasse, ma prière est la mort!  
Or n'i a mais autre confort;  
Morir m'estuet de compagnie,  
Car assès mius aim mort que vie.'

Narcissus 999-1002.

Her prayer is answered by an immediate death.

This union in death is, however, presented not as a celebration of love, but rather as a warning to other lovers: -

Or si gardent tuit autre amant  
Qu'il ne muirent en tel sanblant!

Narcissus 1009-10.

This sets it apart from Piramus et Tisbé and Deus Amanz, also from Yonec, in which, although the lovers do not die together, they are finally united in a common tomb<sup>64</sup>. In the circumstances it is fitting that the reunion in death should take place in this way, twenty or so years after the death of Muldumarec. If the lady had died with him, there would have been no child to avenge the murder of Muldumarec by the lady's husband. It is when Muldumarec's son, born to the lady after Muldumarec's death, is adult that he discovers the truth about his father. Only with this knowledge is he able to avenge his father's death, by killing the husband. This timing ensures also that justice is done for Muldumarec's people, who have been deprived of a lord since Muldumarec's death. Yonec is now of age to assume his natural role as his father's successor. For both of these reasons it is important that the lady should continue to love after Muldumarec's death: she has still to fulfil her role as the mother of Muldumarec's son. It is Muldumarec himself who stresses the necessity of her not dying with him, despite her expressed desire to do so (Yonec 410-36). It is she who defines her duty after his death, and in fulfilling this duty she is in a sense repaying her debt to him, for her partial responsibility for his death. The lady, therefore, survives for so long as there is an injustice unrighted. As soon as she has revealed the facts to Yonec, she collapses onto Muldumarec's tomb and dies. Thus, her wish to die with Muldumarec is fulfilled only once justice has been assured. In such circumstances, she is honoured in death by her son and her lover's people in a way that she would never have been had she died earlier<sup>65</sup>. In celebration of the love between her and Muldumarec she is buried alongside him: -

A grant honur la dame unt prise  
E el sarcu posee e mise  
Delez le cors de son ami.  
Deus lur face bone mercil

Yonec 549-52.

The tomb in which they are enclosed in their private love becomes a public memorial to this love, which met only with opposition so long as they lived.

Thus in two of the lais - Deus Amanz and Yonec - and possibly in a third - Piramus et Tisbé - the double death of the lovers represents not only the culmination of their love in a private sense, but also the recognition and celebration of this love by society.

This contrasts with the death of the lovers in both Equitan and Ignauze, which can in no sense be seen as a form of fulfilment in love, as will be seen in the following chapter.

#### 7. Love Transcending Physical Separation

It has already emerged in the course of this chapter that if absolute fulfilment in a love relationship is not possible when the lovers are apart, partial fulfilment can in certain circumstances be possible. The negative impact that physical separation can have on a love relationship will be considered in Chapter V. It seems important, as a counterbalance to that particular focus, to highlight the ways in which love can nonetheless survive against such obstacles.

In Milun, we have seen, the messages carried by the swan between the lovers during the period of the lady's marriage ensure that contact is maintained between them, albeit indirectly. These messages allow each to be assured of the continuing love of the lover, providing them with some degree of comfort and happiness (Milun 154-288).

In the Lai d'Amour, it is also by means of a correspondence, delivered in a more orthodox manner, that the lovers are able to continue their relationship after the knight has returned to his own country. Before leaving her, he affirms that his love for her will not be reduced by distance: -

Cil respont: 'La moie amor toute  
Est vostre, et bien sachiez de voir,  
Mes cuers, ma joie et mon pooir,  
Que vostre sui ou que je soie.'

Amour 196-99.

This notion of the power of love to transcend physical separation becomes the central theme of his letters to her. This is because the essence of their love exists not at a physical level but as an inseparable union of their hearts: -

La provance que il a fete  
Con li dui cuer uns seus devienent,

Amour 324-25,

The knight asserts: -

'Nos somes dui cors a un cuer.'

Amour 270 .

They are no more divisible into two separate beings than is the water of two tributaries that has flowed into one river (Amour 233-49). This conceit is continued and expanded to emphasise their unity as lovers. As it was the same dart of love that struck them simultaneously, the wound it inflicted apparently in each of them separately must be the same wound. Thus from the first moment of their love, their oneness has been established incontrovertibly. The knight states: -

'Ne font les deus plaies que une.'

Amour 436 .

In this way their love is assured of survival even when the lovers are physically separated.

In Guigemar the lovers are separated for a period without means of

direct contact, even by letter. This they have anticipated, and to protect their love from threat in this time the lady has given to Guigemar a tunic that she has knotted around her and he has fastened a belt around him (Guigemar 557-75). These symbolise the unbreakable bond between the lovers and ensures they will never be untrue to each other. The belt and the knotted tunic also serve to preserve their faithfulness in a more tangible way. As Guigemar swears he will not marry any woman who cannot unknot the tunic (Guigemar 645-54), so the lady swears never to give her love to any man who cannot unfasten the belt (Guigemar 721-25). Because of the magical qualities with which the belt and tunic are endowed, it is only each other who will be able to undo them (Guigemar 737-42; 790-821). In exchanging such tokens they are making a very positive commitment to their love, a commitment that cannot be broken no matter how great the distance between them or long the separation lasts<sup>66</sup>.

In Laustic it is the nightingale that serves a similar purpose, providing a link between the lovers that is both symbolic and actual. At the beginning of the lai, the lovers are able to enjoy a partial fulfilment of their love, although unable even to be together properly. At this time the nightingale provides with its sweet singing an excuse for them to go and lean out of their windows, and thereby to talk to each other (Laustic 39-90).

After the jealous husband has killed the nightingale, its value becomes symbolic. The lady sends the dead bird to her lover to indicate that just as the bird will no longer be able to sing, neither will they be able to talk to each other (Laustic 126-48). The lover then places the bird in a richly decorated casket which he

keeps with him as a constant reminder of their love (Laustic 149-56)<sup>67</sup>. Such a casket is clearly reminiscent of a reliquary in which a precious object is enshrined, or indeed of a sarcophagus, such as the one that becomes a memorial to the love between Muldumarec and the lady in Yonec.

The lovers in Piramus et Tisbé have no need for reminders or symbols of their love for each other during their enforced separation. It is the power of love as destiny that ensures the bond of love between them can never be broken so long as they are alive. Throughout this period when there seems little hope of their being united, they are unable to escape for an instant from the awareness of their impotent submission to love, which they wear as a yoke (Piramus et Tisbé 145-312).

In Chievrefoil Tristan and Iseult are similarly held in an inescapable thrall by love, so that their passionate yearning for each other continues unabated throughout the period that he spends away from her in Wales (Chievrefoil 15-26)<sup>68</sup>. As for Piramus and Tisbé, it is the very intensity of their love that prevents the essential bond between them from ever being completely severed.

In the Lai de l'Espine also the love between the young couple survives through the period when they are unable to be together or even to communicate with each other (Espine 107-264).

In Eliduc, circumstances twice force Eliduc to be separated from the woman he loves. Firstly he is separated from Guildeluec when forced into exile by his lord. We have seen how throughout this period of exile Eliduc retains a strong sense of the loyalty he owes his wife



(Eliduc 322-26; 460-77). This at least is preserved, even though the love itself is weakened. Guildeluec's love for Eliduc, however, remains as strong as ever, as is evidenced from the joy with which she greets his return from exile (Eliduc 705-10). This return to Brittany involves Eliduc, however, in a separation from Guilliadun, whom he by now loves more than his wife. That his love for her continues unaffected by physical distance cannot be doubted, his unhappiness indicates the extent to which their relationship is important to him (Eliduc 711-16). Although the focus is exclusively on his reaction to the situation, Guilliadun's love clearly survives with equal strength (Eliduc 781-86).

What is striking in Eliduc is that it should end with the voluntary separation of the lovers, when after a period of happy marriage Eliduc and Guilliadun withdraw into a monastic existence. Although his monastery and her convent are not too far distant from each other, there can be no direct contact between them and they are dependent on a messenger to carry letters between them. This is not, however, a breach in their love, as they continue to be concerned about each other, praying for each other (Eliduc 1161-80).

From the initial experience of separation of Eliduc and Guildeluec, we see that love surviving physical separation is not necessarily reciprocal; although a bond based on their marriage between them, it is her love that remains the stronger.

In Lanval, during the period of separation from his mistress, Lanval has no certainty that his love for her is reciprocated at all. The fear of having lost her love completely does not, however, diminish his own feelings; on the contrary it is through this that he comes

to realise his own commitment to the relationship as his passion is strengthened (Lanval 329-408).

In Desiré, Desiré undergoes a similar experience, realising the preciousness of the love between him and the fairy only during the period of their separation (Desiré 293-358). This is equally the case of Graelent, who, once he has lost his mistress, realises that life without her is worthless (Graelent 481-554). Although the circumstances are different, the apparent loss of her husband causes the lady in Doon to appreciate more fully the value of love, which will survive the years of separation.

Thus, we see, that in cases of the physical separation of lovers, it is not only possible for love to transcend it and to continue at the same degree. It can also result in an increased commitment to that love, by one or both of the lovers, in a way that was not possible when fulfilment in love was too easily attained and perhaps taken for granted. In this way, periods of separation can play a positive role in enabling the lovers to achieve a greater degree of fulfilment in their relationship once they are reunited.

Personal relationships of a familial nature, as well as those of an amorous nature, can survive periods of physical separation. This we see in Fresne, in which the bond between mother and daughter is preserved not at an emotional level, but by means of objects: the coverlet and the ring. These represent a symbolic bond between Fresne and her family background, preserved through the period of separation; they also serve as a material bond, enabling the recognition and emotional reunion of mother and child. Thus they are endowed with a dual significance as an inseverable bond, in much

the same way as the belt and tunic in Guigemar.

In Milun, it is the ring that is left with the son when he is taken to be raised by his aunt that similarly ensures that his separation from his parents will not be permanent. It is because of the ring that Milun is able to recognise his son when they meet many years later at the tournament (Milun 67-120; 289-304; 429-530). In Doon, a ring is used to exactly the same effect, to ensure a reunion between father and son after a long separation, the link between them never completely broken (Doon 175-286).

In each of these *lais*, the object has a symbolic value appreciated by the abandoned child as representing a link with his/her parents, and a material value, which is the aspect primarily focused upon. It is the object as object that allows for the reconciliation of parents and child and the consequent fulfilment of a relationship that has been in abeyance<sup>69</sup>.

What emerges from a consideration of all these instances of separation, whether between lovers or between parents and children, is that the relationship itself, and the love at the core of the relationship can survive it. Although such separation prevents those concerned from enjoying an actively fulfilling relationship, the essential bond between them is not necessarily severed, allowing for the possibility of reconciliation. In some cases, indeed, the love is strengthened as a result of estrangement, which can, then be seen as fulfilling a positive role within the development of the relationship.

It is evident from this study that in none of the *lais* is the

subject of personal fulfilment totally divorced from a social context; the various forms of personal fulfilment invariably existing within some sort of relationship with society, based either on equilibrium or on conflict<sup>70</sup>. In many of the *lais*, there is an attempt to establish a balance whereby the fulfilment of a personal relationship - be it familial, feudal or amorous - coincides with fulfilment in social terms<sup>71</sup>. This fusion of the personal and the social is integral to the fulfilment of a large number of familial and feudal relationships, although not all. In the case of amorous love, the situation is often more complex.

The ideal balance is achievable only in marriage, as both a social institution and a love match. It is only in matrimony that a love relationship can receive the approval of society and can, thereby, be integrated into society. Although presented with reference to the social significance of marriage, conjugal felicity is primarily presented as the ultimate consummation of a love relationship.

Much personal happiness is to be derived from other - extra-marital - relationships, adulterous and otherwise. Fulfilment in these is achievable, however, only in isolation from the existence in society of the individual, in the face of explicit or implicit opposition from society<sup>72</sup>. This, of necessity, imposes restrictions upon the degree of fulfilment to be enjoyed within such relationships, which remain vulnerable to social pressures, at least potentially if not in actuality. The limitations upon the happiness of lovers in these situations highlights the desirability of marriage, in which there is no such conflict between the desires of the lovers and the demands and expectations of society. Thus it is that marriage appears as the ideal to many of the lovers in the *lais*, even those

able to enjoy a considerable degree of freedom in their love.

In a relationship unsanctioned by marriage, complete fulfilment in love is possible only when it has been totally freed from socially imposed restrictions. Such is the case for those lovers who leave the Real World, renouncing forever their rights and responsibilities in society. This implies a commitment by both lovers to their relationship, founded in their realisation that fulfilment in love is of primordial importance to them, surpassing all other concerns. Consummate fulfilment in love appears, then, as a reward for a quality of love and an attitude to love.

The importance of commitment in love as the basis of a relationship is repeatedly stressed in the different *lais*. Possibly the greatest evidence of such commitment appears in those relationships in which death is chosen in preference to a life without love. The role of death in love relationships is ambivalent, apparently denying the lovers the possibility of the fulfilment in love to which they have aspired, but in fact providing them with the only form of fulfilment truly accessible to them. In freeing them from the restrictions imposed upon them by their existence in society during their lifetime, death allows them to achieve absolute and permanent union in their love.

The nature of the love that is presented as ideal in the *lais* varies according to the vision of the different authors and to the convention or tradition to which they owe allegiance. The relative approval or disapproval of the authors towards the lovers in their love and in their conduct is expressed in many of the *lais*, either obliquely, through the experiences of the lovers, or explicitly,

through the narrational voice. In relation to this, the lovers are endowed with a degree of auto-determination, which defines the extent to which they deserve to achieve fulfilment in love. In certain *lais*, although the responsibility of the lovers within their relationship is not wholly negated, it is diminished, and the power of love asserted as a force of destiny, benevolent or malevolent, to which the lovers must ultimately submit.

Footnotes: Chapter Four

- 1 (p.254) Judith Rice Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France: Themes and Variations vol I.  
see p.151.

- 2 (p.254) Oliver M. Johnston: 'Sources of the Lay of the Two Lovers'.

see pp.34-35. Deus Amanz is made up of two traditional stories, one being that of the widower who loves his daughter with incestuous love.

the theme of the father who, after the death of his wife, desires to marry his own daughter is widely diffused in the folklore and tradition of different countries. p.35

see p.38. Johnston stresses that Deus Amanz is not necessarily derived from a Celtic source.

Jeanne Wathelet-Willem: 'Un Lai de Marie de France: Les Deux Amants'.

see p.1143.

Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France.  
see p.83 note 85; pp.142-44.

The affection between the King and his daughter (although we shall never know whether the perversion of a normal father-daughter relationship went as far as incest) has become a scandal. p.142

In his desire to keep her for himself, the King is surely anti-nature. p.144

- 3 (p.259) Ernest Hoepffner: 'Pour la chronologie des Lais de Marie de France'.  
see p.49. Hoepffner points to the similarity between the character of Guigemar and that of King Malgo in Wace's Brut. Both have many good qualities, are specifically fond of their parents, are tainted with the possibility of homosexuality.

Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France.

In Guigemar the abnormality is that of Guigemar's closeness to his sister and his mother. p 83 note 85

Robert B. Green: 'The Fusion of Magic and Realism in two Lays of Marie de France'.  
see p.325.

- 4 (p.262) Rosemarie Jones: The Theme of Love in the Romans d'Antiquité.  
see p.73

Jean Frappier: 'Vues sur les conceptions courtoises dans les littératures d'oc et d'oïl au XIIe siècle'.

Frappier highlights this notion of the conciliation between love and society in marriage as being peculiar to the courtly

love literature of the North of France, and absent from the literature of the Southern troubadours.

Dans le Nord aussi, l'idéal nouveau implique une adoration pour la femme aimée, confère à l'amour une valeur d'ennoblissement. Mais cet autre 'amour courtois' ne gravite pas exactement dans la même orbite que la 'fin'amor'. Il tend à se concilier avec la morale traditionnelle, à préserver les exigences de la loi sociale et de la religion. C'est ainsi qu'il n'apparaît nullement comme incompatible avec le mariage. p.144

Jean Frappier: Amour courtois et table ronde.  
see pp. 13-14.

Jean Leclercq: Le Mariage vu par les moines au XIIe siècle.  
see pp.11-54. There was an assumption, sometimes implicit but increasingly explicit, among religious writers of the twelfth century that there was a strong affective bond between spouses, and this was not necessarily an idealistic view.

de bien de textes il ressort que le mariage n'était pas seulement d'ordre social, juridique ou sacramental, mais qu'il comportait une composante affective qu'on ne doit pas craindre d'appeler par son nom: l'amour. pp.11-12.

- 5 (p.264) Emil Schiödt: L'Amour et les amoureux dans les Lais de Marie de France.  
see p.21

- 6 (p.264) Lise Lawson: 'La Structure du récit dans les Lais de Marie de France'.  
see pp.238-39. Lise Lawson stresses the importance for Marie of this fusion between personal fulfilment and social fulfilment, which is made possible within marriage.

Leur situation maintenant respectable, leur fils reprennent sa place et leur amour fidèle est récompensé. La fin heureuse de Milun rare chez Marie, corrobore notre hypothèse: Marie veut encourager et célébrer un amour légitime et qui sait demeurer fidèle en dépit de tous les obstacles. pp.238-39

- 7 (p.265) Green: 'The Fusion of Magic and Realism in two Lays of Marie de France'.  
see p.334.

- 8 (p.267) Robert Benjamin Green: The Growth of Love: A Study of Reality and Symbolism in the Lays of Marie de France.

The girl recognises that fleeing from her father with her lover is useless, for flight will make them into fugitives and force them into a life of instability based on stealth and secrecy. p.136

- 9 (p.268) Helen C. R. Laurie: 'Narcissus'.  
see p.113.

Jones: The Theme of Love in the Romans d'Antiquité.  
see p.17.



- 10 (p.269) Mireille Guillet-Rydell: 'Nature et rôle du mariage dans les lais anonymes bretons'.

Aucune sentimentalité chez les deux jeunes gens: demoiselle hautaine et exigeante, héros égoïste uniquement désireux de faire étalage de sa supériorité physique. p.93

Herman Braet: 'Tyolet/Perceval: The Father Quest'.

The outcome of the plot is, obviously, significant on a sociological level: the princely marriage corresponds to the aspirations of the juvenes in medieval society as defined by Georges Duby. p.305

- 11 (p.269) Guillet-Rydell: 'Nature et rôle du mariage dans les lais anonymes bretons'.  
see p.94.

- 12 (p.271) Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France.  
see p.94. Rothschild suggests that within this very description of the marriage we find a clue as to the flaw in it: -

The description of the married pair ends with a reference to their love: 'il amot li, e ele lui'. This statement with its double beat would seem to guarantee reciprocity, and the coupling of husband and wife, to suggest the indissolubility of their union. Or could it be that by presenting them separately (instead, for example of using the verb s'entramer as she so often does of lovers), Marie has wished to introduce the nuance of separation: as if each is loving the other in his own and separate way? p.94

- 13 (p.274) Green: The Growth of Love.  
see p.42. Green focuses on the flaw of the marriage.

The lay begins with a love that is unsatisfactory because it is not founded on both passion and loyalty. Between Eliduc and his wife there is only 'loiauté' (v.12) but the excitement of passion is missing. Nowhere in the entire story are we given any indication of a sexual attraction between the two. p.42

- 14 (p.277) Colin Morris: The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200.

The two ideals of friendship and love were expressed in ways essentially inimical to one another, and, in spite of the attempt of a few literary men to champion both sets of values, they really belonged to different ways of life. pp.117-18

- 15 (p.281) Philippe Ménard: Le Rire et le sourire dans le roman courtois en France au moyen âge (1150-1250).

Au XIIe et au XIIIe siècle, dans les lais comme dans les romans, le mari jaloux est d'une façon ou d'une autre l'artisan de son propre malheur. p.251

- 16 (p.282) Paula Clifford: Marie de France: Lais.  
see p.55.
- 17 (p.282) Jean Frappier: 'Structure et sens du Tristan : version commune, version co oise'.  
see p.269.
- 18 (p.282) Schiøtt: L'Amour et les amoureux dans les Lais de Marie de France.  
see pp.26-27.

Les amours adultères, dans les lais de Marie ne semblent être regardés comme coupables que sous certaines conditions; sous d'autres elles sont permises et honnêtes. p.26

- 19 (p.284) Moshé Lazar: Amour courtois et fin' amors dans la littérature du XII e siècle.

la biche est donc ici un symbole: elle représente le destin de Guigemar, son double, sa fatalité. La blessure qu'il a faite à la biche, c'est la blessure qu'il avait ouverte jusqu'à là dans le coeur des femmes qu'il avait dédaignées. C'est ainsi une blessure dans son propre coeur (la flèche est revenue le blesser). Puisque le destin de l'homme consiste à aimer et à vivre dans la joie d'amour (comme le répétaient les troubadours). Guigemar, en se soustrayant à cette loi a gravement offensé sa destinée. p.189

- 20 (p.285) Marcelle Thiébaux: The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature.  
see pp.18-19. Emphasis is placed on the frequent use made in the literature of the motif of the hunt as a pivotal experience for the hero. This applies here in Guigemar, also in other lais - Guingamor, Tyolet, Graelent, Melion, Desiré.

Sometimes a hunt in its entirety will form the prelude to a hero's crucial experience. p.18

The hero's participation in the chase may elicit a sense of his identity; it may define and alter his life. Whether he sees the quarry slain or becomes himself a victim of the enterprise, it is the chase that confers meaning upon his actions. p.19

see pp.89-109. Marcelle Thiébaux also highlights the frequent correspondence of the actual hunt and the pursuit for fulfilment in love. In Guigemar, the relationship between the two is explicit.

A chase initiates him to the discovery or rediscovery of desire. Whether he is lured by his actual or supernatural prey, driven like a hound to an irresistible chase, or whether he finds himself the stricken beast, the lover seldom assumes command. p.93

Antoinette Knapton: Mythe et psychologie chez Marie de France dans Guigemar.

Marie nous fait comprendre que la Nature veut que l'homme accomplisse son destin par l'amour. p.73

- 21 (p.285) Rupert T. Pickens: 'Thematic Structure in Marie de France's Guigemar'.  
see pp.332-33. In his Christian interpretation of Guigemar, Rupert Pickens sees the hind as having been sent to Guigemar by God.

Knapton: Mythe et psychologie chez Marie de France dans Guigemar'.

disons résolument que ce qui meurt par la blessure infligée à la Biche-mère c'est le passé de Guigemar, sa dépendance envers 'sa bone mere e sa sorur'; mais la Biche-femme va naître et vivre. p.76

- 22 (p.285) Paula Clifford: Marie de France: Lais.

The lai of Guigemar followed Provençal courtly tradition in one very important aspect: the hero was not seen as having any freedom of choice. It was Guigemar's destiny to fall in love eventually and when he did there was no question as to whom he should love. p.29

- 23 (p.285) Mary Virginia Allen: The Literary Craftsmanship of Marie de France.

The description of the boat in Guigemar too is more than extraneous embellishment. It lets the reader know immediately that this is no ordinary ship (...). After this description it is impossible for the reader to question the supernatural operation of the vessel. p.229

Green: The Growth of Love.

He will get in the boat to voyage across the sea, the archetypal symbol of life and mother and birth, in this case birth of emotions. If he is to seek fulfilment, he must make the trip which will give him access to the complicated world of committed and tender love which must follow love that is purely sexual love. The journey will take him to the land of his cure. He can no longer content himself with idle and irresponsible love but must either mature with the help of love or die. p.70

Knapton: Mythe et psychologie chez Marie de France dans Guigemar.  
see p.95.

Pierre Jonin: 'Merveilleux celtique et symbolisme universel dans Guigemar de Marie de France'.

Pierre Jonin offers a discussion of the possible relationship between the supernatural aspects in Guigemar and Celtic and other cultures.

Celtique aussi sans doute la nef merveilleuse qui provoque l'étonnant voyage de Guigemar. p.243

La tradition chrétienne nous offre bon nombre de ces bateaux qui se dirigent d'eux mêmes. p.252

Le thème du bateau merveilleux par son luxe n'est pas davantage celtique. p.253

The difficulty of definitely affirming the sources for the supernatural in Guigemar to be Celtic applies not only to the ship, but also the the doe: -

Notre biche de Guigemar, blanche, merveilleuse par sa forme comme par sa voix, ne manque donc pas, hors de la littérature celtique, de frères, de soeurs ou de cousins. pp.250-51

- 24 (p.286) Jonin: 'Merveilleux celtique et symbolisme universel dans Guigemar de Marie de France'.  
see p.245.

- 25 (p.286) Ernest Hoepffner: 'Pour la chronologie des Lais de Marie de France'.

De même que Lanval, Guigemar se présente comme un véritable conte de fée, au moins dans sa première partie. Car le lai comprend deux parties très différentes entre elles. p.46

Benkt Wennberg: Marie de France and the Anonymous Lais: a Study of the Narrative Lai in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.

Guigemar is a composite of two tales: one a fairy tale which seems to have been the first part of the account, and the other a courtly adventure with no marvelous elements, which begins in line 207. p.304

Lucy Allen Paton: Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance.  
see pp.66-67. The rationalisation of the fairy figure into a mal mariée.

Antoinette Saly: 'Observations sur le lai de Guigemar'.  
see p.329.

- 26 (p.286) Emanuel J. Mickel Jr.: 'A Reconsideration of the Lais of Marie de France'.

Marie's failure to punish the two lovers does not stem from a social belief that love is superior to marriage. Their relatively happy ending has little to do with adultery; it stems rather from the extraordinary quality of love and loyalty exhibited by the lovers. p.46

- 27 (p.286) Bartina H. Wind: 'L'Idéologie courtoise dans les Lais de Marie de France'.

Il n'y a pas dans les Lais de vrai amour courtois, mais Marie nous présente des héros courtois et cette distinction peut éclairer certains aspects de son oeuvre. p.741

Nous savons qu'elle connaissait les règles de l'amour courtois, sans les appliquer avec la rigueur qu'exigerait la casuistique amoureuse de l'époque. p.745

Clifford: Marie de France: Lais.

Marie is interested in a relationship between equals.  
p.18

- 28 (p.290) Saly: 'Observations sur le lai de Guigemar'.  
see p.331.
- 29 (p.290) Schiött: L'Amour et les amoureux dans les Lais de Marie de France.  
see p.20.
- 30 (p.291) Green: The Growth of Love: A Study of Reality and Symbolism in the Lays of Marie de France.  
see p.84. Green points to the symbolic significance of the swan that has to be nourished if it is to continue to carry messages of love between Milun and the lady, this is the nourishing of the love relationship itself.
- 31 (p.292) Schiött: L'Amour et les amoureux dans les Lais de Marie de France.  
see p.23.
- 32 (p.292) Glyn S. Burgess: 'Two Cases of Mesure in the Lais of Marie de France'.

In a recent article Professor R. T. Pickens stresses rightly in my view that it is not the quality of the love between Equitan and the seneschal's wife that is at stake, but the context of this love. Given the circumstances it should never have existed. Equitan seeks the love of a lady whose husband is possessed of all the virtues and who is discharging responsibilities which in reality devolved upon the king himself. p.202

Edgard Sienaert: Les Lais de Marie de France: du conte merveilleux à la nouvelle psychologique.

Deux obligations y sont systématiquement opposées, les devoirs féodal et amoureux. p.71

Tout le drame d'Equitan est, en effet, d'avoir placé l'amour au-dessus de la fonction. p.74

Coupable, Equitan l'est pleinement: roi, suzerain, ami, il résigne cette triple fidélité dynastique, féodale, personnelle, quand il tombe amoureux. p.75

- 33 (p.292) Emanuel J. Mickel Jr.: 'Marie de France's Use of Irony as a Stylistic and Narrative Device'.  
see p.285.

Robert B. Green: 'Fin'amors dans deux lais de Marie de France Equitan et Chaitivel'.  
see p.268.

Philippe Ménard: 'La Déclaration amoureuse dans la littérature arthurienne au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle.

see pp.37-38. Ménard stresses the seriousness for Marie of the lack of social equality between the lovers.

L'idée que les amoureux doivent se trouver sur un pied d'égalité est tout à fait conforme aux conceptions de la poétesse. pp.37-38

- 34 (p.293) Ernest Hoepffner: 'Le Lai d'Equitan de Marie de France'.

De tous les lais de Marie, celui d'Equitan est le plus cruel pour les amants. Non seulement le châtement qu'ils subissent est plus sévère que partout ailleurs, mais on sent aussi très distinctement qu'à aucun moment la poétesse n'accorde au couple amoureux cette sympathie si tendre dont elle ne se départ jamais à l'égard des amants. Or, c'est précisément dans cette histoire sévère et brutale qu'elle introduit la théorie provençale de l'amour courtois. Est-ce un simple hasard? Nous pensons qu'en le faisant Marie a entendu prononcer une condamnation sévère de cet amour qui n'est motivé par rien que le simple désir sensuel, qui n'a aucune excuse, et qui frappe un vaillant homme, le dévoué serviteur de son maître. Tel est donc l'amour qui entraîne les amants au péché et au crime. p.301

Emanuel J. Mickel Jr.: 'A Reconsideration of the Lais of Marie de France'.

see pp.41-43. Mickel analyses the standards applied by Marie in her presentation of desirable and undesirable love relationships.

Love is approved when it is of high quality and condemned when it is only concupiscence or selfish love. pp.42-43

Equitan is clearly a love of stupidity. p.43

- 35 (p.294) Green: The Growth of Love.

She has no right to Lanval 1) because she is married to the king and 2) because as the queen she represents symbolically the mother figure. p.100

Jeanne Wathelet-Willem: 'Le Personnage de Guenièvre chez Marie de France'.

see pp.122-24. Wathelet-Willem attempts a defence of the Queen's intentions as being simply those of courtliness.

Les paroles de la reine n'excèdent pas le ton de la société courtoise, elles dépeignent une liberté de grande dame qui daigne témoigner d'un attachement affectueux, voire offrir une amitié amoureuse à un chevalier qui a été lésé. pp.123-24

In the context, it is difficult to justify interpreting the Queen's advances in such innocent terms; Lanval certainly does not and it seems unlikely that we are to read him as simply

over-reacting to the situation, as Mme. Wathelet-Willem suggests (p.124).

- 36 (p.294) Sara Sturm: The Lay of Guingamor: a Study.  
see pp.81-90. Sturm focuses on this episode in Guingamor as a central factor in her argument for the lai's being principally concerned with: -

a hero quest in terms of Christian morality. p.10

She demonstrates how in Guingamor the episode of the Queen's seduction is far closer to the Biblical story of Potiphar's wife than are the analogous episodes in Lanval and Graelent.

- 37 (p.295) Schiøtt: L'Amour et les amoureux dans les Lais de Marie de France.  
see pp.22-23.

- 38 (p.296) Ernest Hoepffner: 'Marie de France et l'Eneas'.  
see pp.291; 292. Hoepffner compares Guilliadun's falling in love with Eliduc for his reputation with Lavine's falling in love with Enée having heard of his exploits (Enéas). He also compares details of Guilliadun's expressions of love with those of Dido.

see pp.293-301. It remains uncertain how closely Marie has borrowed from the Roman d'Antiquité, because there are notable differences, as Hoepffner acknowledges.

Ménard, Le Rire et le sourire dans le roman courtois en France au moyen âge (1150-1250).

Sans doute, dans les récits qui restent proches des vieux contes celtiques les écrivains ne se formalisent pas de voir une jeune personne faire des avances à un chevalier. Ainsi la pucelle du lai de Lanval ou la fille du roi dans le lai d'Eliduc ne paraissent nullement choquer le conteur. La fée éprise d'un mortel ne saurait être un parangon de réserve et de pudeur. Il est bien évident que tous les romanciers ne considèrent pas la pucelle réservée, modeste, discrète comme la jeune fille idéale et qu'ils ne songent pas à blâmer l'héroïne qui laisse parler son cœur. pp.215-16

Jean-Charles Payen: Le Motif du repentir dans la littérature française médiévale.

see p.306. Payen focuses on the absence of Christian morality in the lais, particularly as it affects the attitude of young unmarried women to love, and their lack of religious scruples.

L'apparente sensualité de la femme qui dans le lai s'offre sans résistance dès l'heure où elle sait qu'elle a rencontré l'homme de sa vie est de la même nature que l'abandon auquel consent si aisément la jeune fille des vieilles ballades populaires, lorsqu'elle vit d'une passion vraie. (...) Il n'y a presque plus chez elle, de conflit entre la pudeur et le désir; il n'y a presque plus de réticences devant l'aveu. p.306

- 39 (p.296) Glyn S. Burgess: 'Social Status in the Lais of Marie de France'.

Guilliadun shows that even love does not make her impervious to considerations of rank and birth. p.74

- 40 (p.298) Brewster E. Fitz 'The Storm Episode and the Weasel Episode: Sacrificial Casuistry in Marie de France's Eliduc'. see pp.542-47. Brewster Fitz offers an explanation for the sailor's role in Eliduc as a necessary sacrificial figure, and a justification therefore for Eliduc's throwing him overboard.

- 41 (p.299) Ernest Hoepffner: Les Lais de Marie de France.

Ce n'est pas un sujet d'admiration que Marie nous propose, comme Gautier; mais elle réussit à nous faire partager toute la pitié qu'elle éprouve elle-même pour son héros, bien plus vrai et plus richement nuancé dans sa faiblesse que l'impassible héros d'Ille et Galeron. p.106

- 42 (p.299) Lucien Foulet: 'Thomas and Marie in their Relation to the Conteurs'.

Foulet suggests that Marie took the facts of her story from her source.

and like Thomas, she adapted these facts to the requirements of a literary ideal of her own. p.206

- 43 (p.300) Barbara Nelson Sargent: 'The Lai de l'Ombre and the De Amore'. Sargent focuses on the debt of Jean Renart to Andreas Capellanus for his presentation of love.

In Jean Renart's work and in several of Andreas' dialogues the outcome is the same: the man emerges victorious from the battle of words and wits. p.76

The De Amore apparently forms the background to the Lai giving it its general shape and direction, directing its nature and intent. p.76

- 44 (p.302) Jean Frappier: 'A propos du Lai de Tydorel et de ses éléments mythiques'.

see p.569. The absence of moral scruples in the behaviour of the Queen and her lover would seem to indicate a closeness to archaic sources, setting it apart from Marie's story.

- 45 (p.303) Payen: Le Motif du repentir dans la littérature française médiévale.

Ce lai qui commence comme un élégant badinage et se termine de façon sinistre est certainement assez tardif. Il suppose une certaine diffusion de la légende du cœur mangé. Il manifeste une tendance au pire mélodrame. Il est également imprégné d'une galanterie un peu fade qui trahit le déclin des valeurs courtoises. p.323



- 46 (p.310) Glyn S. Burgess: 'The Problem of Internal Chronology in the Lais of Marie de France'.  
see p.142. Burgess draws attention to the similarity between the lady in Chaitivel and the ladies in Capellanus' De Arte Honesti Amandi.
- 47 (p.310) Schiøtt: L'Amour et les amoureux dans les Lais de Marie France.  
see pp.13-14.
- 48 (p.311) John Stevens: 'The granz biens of Marie de France'.  
see p.19. John Stevens rather than noting the differences between this and other lais by Marie in terms of the presentation of love and of the lovers, stresses the similarity: -

Marie, in accordance with her usual method, seizes the emotional points. p.19

- 49 (p.311) Payen: Le Motif du repentir dans la littérature française médiévale.

Le Chaitivel n'est qu'à demi courtois. A y regarder de près il s'agit encore d'un lai de la démesure. p.324

Mickel: 'A Reconsideration of the Lais of Marie de France'.

Of all the women described in the lais, perhaps this lady best exemplifies the courtly graces and charm. Yet nowhere is the uselessness and destructiveness of the 'courtly' attitude more apparent. Such refinement scarcely masks the cruelty of a 'love' which is in reality only cupidity. p.59

- 50 (p.311) Green: The Growth of Love.

Because the lady tries to love all four without any show of sensuality or commitment, she sincerely loves none of them and is left with not even one valid lover. When love becomes a game, it does not survive. p.62

Roger Dubuis: Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles et la tradition de la nouvelle en France au moyen âge.

Cette coquette est affligée d'une grande sècheresse de coeur; courtisée par quatre hommes à la fois, elle examine froidement les mérites que peut faire valoir chacun et, après mûre réflexion se décide à n'en point choisir un de préférence aux autres.(...) Au fond, elle n'aime qu'elle même. p.400

- 51 (p.312) Green: 'Fin'Amors dans deux lais de Marie de France: Equitan et Chaitivel'.

Green criticises the lady for being a coquette, wilfully playing with the emotions of her suitors: -

La dame dans Chaitivel est punie parceque son amour n'est qu'une manifestation de son égoïsme. p.272

He also criticises the suitors themselves for choosing to participate in this situation: -

Fondamentalement, les chevaliers, avec la complicité de la dame, participent à un jeu d'amour et en sont les victimes malheureuses. Les conquêtes artificielles sont sévèrement jugées. p.270

Burgess: 'The Problem of Internal Chronology in the Lais of Marie de France'.

The lady in Chaitivel has attracted more criticism from scholars than her behaviour warrants. It is primarily the male protagonists who are led astray by love from the path of commonsense. p.143

- 52 (p.314) Schiøtt: L'Amour et les amoureux dans les Lais de Marie de France.

see p.28. Chaitivel appears as the exception to Emil Schiøtt's otherwise valid argument distinguishing the values of love upheld by Marie from those of amour courtois.

Il n'y a rien de tout cela dans Marie. Les rapports du héros et de la héroïne, qu'ils soient adultères, comme dans les lais que nous venons d'analyser ou qu'ils ne le soient pas, comme dans les autres, sont toujours d'une nature simple et affectueuse sans qu'aucun des amants cherche à s'emparer de la suprématie. p.28

Thomas D. Watts Jr. and Raymond J. Cormier: 'Toward an Analysis of Certain Lais of Marie de France'.

Marie's own strictures towards or rejection of the doctrinal side of medieval love - as represented in mid-twelfth century French literature. There can be no question, as many scholars have shown, that Marie is opposed to the cold superficiality in the 'system'. She advocates a concept of love which embraces deeper, affective notions like sincerity, selflessness, the inevitability of pain in love, and at the same time the ability of true love to cause miracles. p.249

- 53 (p.316) Angela Lucas: Women in the Middle Ages: Religion, Marriage and Letters.

see p.85. The importance of virginity in brides.

- 54 (p.324) Green: The Growth of Love.

see pp.96-99.

the fairy mistress, as the incarnation of the mother-lover-wish fulfiller-love receiver. p.99

Michèle Koubichkine: 'A Propos du Lai de Lanval'.  
see p.474.

Frederick Hodgson: 'Alienation and the Otherworld in Lanval, Yonec, and Guigemar'.

In Lanval, the fairy mistress bestows upon Lanval unlimited wealth with which he shall attempt to re-establish his value at Arthur's court. Thus the Otherworld responding immediately to the injustice of the Arthurian world, presents Lanval with an alternative reality. p.21

W.T.H. Jackson: 'The Arthuricity of Marie de France'.  
see p.9. Jackson stresses the importance of the contrast between the generosity with which the lady offers herself to Lanval and the meanness of the Arthurian court.

Clifford: Marie de France: Lais.  
see p.55.

55 (p.327) Robert Sturges : 'Texts and Readers in Marie de France's Lais'.  
see p.261.

56 (p.328) William Henry Schofield: 'The Lays of Graelent and Lanval and the Story of Wayland'.  
see pp.141-43. The combining of two Celtic traditions.

Tom Peete Cross: 'The Celtic Elements in the Lays of Lanval and Graelent'.

the fundamental elements of the fountain episodes in Graelent and Guingamor were probably accessible in Celtic tradition before the twelfth century, and therefore it is unnecessary to look for them elsewhere. p.622

Sturm: The Lay of Guingamor: a Study.  
see p.31.

R.N. Illingworth: 'The Composition of Graelent and Guingamor'.  
see p.32. Derivation from two Celtic traditions.

Ménard: 'La Déclaration amoureuse dans la littérature arthurienne au XII<sup>e</sup> Siècle'.  
see pp.34-35. Ménard compares the brusqueness of Graelent's advances to the lady with those of the heroes of Desiré and Guingamor in contrast to the behaviour of Lanval.

On ne saurait affirmer que ces trois lais sont antérieurs aux lais de Marie de France. Mais il est évident qu'ils ne relèvent guère de l'inspiration courtoise, qu'ils gardent le souvenir d'un état de civilisation plus ancien et qu'ils conservent de vieux thèmes folkloriques sans doute d'origine celtique. p.35

He recognises the ambiguity that nonetheless exists: -

On sent que pour nos conteurs l'absence de déclaration et la naïve irruption du désir a quelque chose de choquant. Dans les faciles amours d'un chevalier et d'une pucelle féerique, la déclaration, sans être un élément essentiel, reste un élément obligé. Alors que les avances inélégantes n'aboutissent à rien, la requête d'amour, si brève et si conventionnelle qu'elle soit garde une valeur rituelle. On ne saurait s'en passer. p.35

- 57 (p.335) Mortimer J. Donovan: 'Lai du Lecheor: A Reinterpretation'.  
see pp. 84-85. Mortimer Donovan sees Lecheor as a late work  
and as a parody of other lais and their presentation of love.

Dubuis: Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles et la tradition de la  
nouvelle en France au moyen âge.

Ce lai, à vrai dire n'a pas de sujet au sens où le mot  
est entendu dans les autres lais, c'est tout simplement  
une variation sur la notion même de sujet. p.435

Dubuis sums up the relationship between Lecheor and the other  
lais: -

Un sujet digne d'un fabliau, mais un ton digne d'un lai,  
c'est la définition même de la parodie. p.435

- 58 (p.335) P.E. Bennett: 'Le Lai du Cort Mantel et la critique de  
la courtoisie'.  
see pp.109-10.

- 59 (p.339) Jean-Charles Payen: Les Origines de la courtoisie dans  
la littérature française médiévale.

La mort par amour, cette forme subtile et raffinée du  
suicide, serait scandaleuse dans un contexte chrétien si  
les tragiques légendes du monde celtique (je pense à celle  
de Tristan) et les souvenirs de l'antiquité littéraire  
n'avaient pas accoutumé les esprits à l'admettre, au  
moins autant et sans doute plus que n'auraient pu faire  
les textes islamiques. p.62

Marie-Noëlle Lefay-Toury: La Tentation du suicide dans le roman  
français du XIIe siècle.  
see pp.13-34

- 60 (p.341) Wathelet-Willem: 'Un Lai de Marie de France: Les Deux  
Amants'.  
see p.1150. Wathelet-Willem suggests that the Old French  
Piramus et Tisbé is the younger text, influenced not only by  
Ovid, but also by Deus Amanz.

Burgess: 'The Problem of Internal Chronology in the Lais of  
Marie de France'.  
see p.142. Burgess supports Jeanne Wathelet-Willem's  
suggestion about the relationship between Piramus et Tisbé and  
Deus Amanz.

- 61 (p.341) Burgess: 'Two Cases of Mesure in the Lais of Marie de  
France'.  
see pp.204-08. Burgess stresses the mitigating circumstances  
for the boy's act of demesure, pointing to the fact that it in  
no sense indicates a flaw in the quality of his love for the  
girl. This appears from the lai's being in effect a  
celebration of their love.

Kristine Brightenback: 'Remarks on the Prologue to Marie de  
France's Lais'.  
see p.176.

Kristine Brightenback: 'The Metamorphoses and Narrative conjointure in "Deus Amanz", "Yonec" and "Le Laüstic"'.  
see p.8. Brightenback likens the role of the mountain in Deus Amanz to the mulberry bush in Ovid's Piramus and Thisbe.

Clearly the mountain at whose summit the young lovers perish in Deus Amanz stands as a public memorial to them. p.8

Like the Babylonian adolescents in Ovid's story, the two lovers here become only one in death, a oneness that is monumentalised. p.8

- 62 (p.342) Lefay-Toury: La Tentation du suicide dans le roman français du XIIe siècle.  
see pp.57-82.

- 63 (p.342) Jones: The Theme of Love in the Romans d'Antiquité

At the end of the poem, in spite of nothing specific being said, it appears that both Dané and Narcisus, though too late, accept a relationship which has its own conventions and which would perhaps in time have led to marriage. p.17

- 64 (p.343) Brightenback: 'Remarks on the Prologue to Marie de France's Lais'.  
see p.176.

Brightenback: 'The Metamorphoses and Narrative conjointure in "Deus Amanz", "Yonec" and "Le Laüstic"'.  
see p.8.

Like the mountain in Deus Amanz, the tomb publicly commemorates past misfortunes. Like the nightingale relic in Le Laüstic, offers the possibility of transcending the past. p.9

- 65 (p.343) Sienaert: Les Lais de Marie de France; du conte merveilleux à la nouvelle psychologique.

Sienaert points to this indirectly in his argument as to Yonec's role within the lai: -

Quant à Yonec, sa seule fonction dans le lai est celle de la vengeance et sa subséquente accession au trône de son père. Il est par là le personnage principal, puisque c'est lui qui incarne l'idée victorieuse. p.129

- 66 (p.346) Green: The Growth of Love.  
see p.75. Green stresses the symbolic value of the belt and knotted tunic.

Sturges : 'Texts and Readers in Marie de France's Lais'.  
see pp.254-55.

- 67 (p.347) John A. Frey: 'Linguistic and Psychological Couplings in the Lays of Marie de France'.  
see p.4. The death of the nightingale points to the mortality of all things that are living, there all things that are human, including human love.

Robert D. Cottrell: 'Le Lai du Laustic: From Physicality to Spirituality'.

Cottrell goes further than simply affirming that the love is not destroyed by the death of the nightingale.

The love between the lady and the knight, now entirely independent of physical proximity, has been transformed from an imperative carnal desire into an ideal spiritual bond. Physicality, so deliberately and insistently suggested in the first part of the lai, has given way to spirituality. p.504

Through the death and subsequent sanctification of the nightingale Marie has illustrated the transformation of an urgent physical desire into an enduring bond. p.505

This would seem to be too extreme a reading of the transformation wrought on the love by the death of the nightingale, for there is not such particular emphasis on the carnal nature of the love initially, in a relationship restricted, after all, to conversation.

William S. Woods: 'Marie de France's Laüstic'. see p.206. Woods reads the ending of the story, following the death of the nightingale, in wholly negative terms, the relationship being severed forever. He makes no suggestion of the power of love as an emotion to transcend physical separation. This is because of his interpretation of the nightingale in purely symbolic terms.

The death of the symbol must mean the end of the love for nothing in the remainder of the poem suggests that the lovers will ever see each other again. p.206

Mickel: 'A Reconsideration of the Lais of Marie de France'.

Mickel's interpretation of the death of the bird as the symbol of the love is also negative.

Here the bird indeed represents their love, but it should be noted that it is placed in what amounts to a coffin and is sealed in, never to be seen again. What is being emphasized here is that the lover carried around with him always the agonizing memory of his lost love, and that never again would his love be assuaged by the sight of his loved one, represented by the bird. p.56

Robert B. Green: 'Marie de France's Laüstic: Love's Victory Through Symbolic Expression'.

It is my contention that once the symbolism has been examined it becomes obvious that the poem does not recount the unfortunate consequences of an unhappy love affair but is the sublimated depiction of a relationship which persists and which triumphs over exterior limitation. p.695.

Despite the fact that on the level of the physical reality the bird does die, the physical and emotional love it represented remains very much alive and vital. p.698.

Brightenback: 'Remarks on the Prologue to Marie de France's Lais'.  
see p.176.

Clifford: Marie de France: Lais.

the dead bird becomes totally a symbol of eternal love as it is placed in a casket of precious stones which is, in effect, a reliquary. p.74

Brightenback: 'The Metamorphoses and Narrative Conjointure in "Deus Amanz", "Yonec" and "Le Laüstic"'.  
see p.6. Kristine Brightenback stresses the role of the dead nightingale in its casket/reliquary as a commemorative of the love.

Although the circumstances which permitted that love to flourish, appear to have been brought to an end, the love itself endures. p.6

68 (p.347) Roger Dubuis: 'Plaidoyer pour une lecture globale du lai du Chèvrefeuille'.  
see p.374.

69 (p.350) Micheline de Combarieu: 'Les Objets dans les Lais de Marie de France'.  
see p.41.

70 (p.351) Frappier: Amour courtois et table ronde.

Les romanciers d'oïl ne cessent guère d'associer amour et chevalerie. p.15

On est en droit de penser que le thème fondamental des romans antiques et des romans bretons, l'alliance courtoise de l'amour et de la chevalerie dépend d'une tradition bien établie dans le nord avant toute influence de la poésie d'oc, autant qu'il soit permis d'en juger. pp.30-31

Sienaert: Les Lais de Marie de France.

see pp.190-91. Sienaert stresses the importance of this relationship between love and society in Marie's lais, noting that it is not always the same in all of the stories.

Dans tous les cas la réalité féodale s'oppose à l'amour sous l'une ou l'autre de ses multiples formes. Ici encore les valeurs sociales ne sont acceptées et donc victorieuses que si elles sont revalorisées par le mérite personnel. p.191

Jackson: 'The Arthuricity of Marie de France'.

Jackson compares Marie's Lais to Chrétien's romances in the treatment of love and society: -

In all of them, love is the most important force motivating human conduct. The difference lies in the reaction of this force on the social circumstances in which the lovers find themselves. Thus the Lais and the Arthurian romances have an important common factor, the recognition of the importance of love in human affairs, and a common object, the examination of the social implications of love by setting it in a social context specially set up for the purpose, the Arthurian world or a reflection of it. p.2

Philippe Ménard: Les Lais de Marie de France.  
see pp. 139-40.

Chez Marie de France l'opposition n'est pas vive et systématique entre l'amour et la société. p.139

- 71 (p.351) Cross: 'The Celtic Elements in the Lays of Lanval and Graelent'.  
see p. 644.
- 72 (p.351) Dafydd Evans: 'Wish Fulfilment: The Social Function and Classification of Old French Romances'.  
see p.130. In the historical reality of the period, there was rarely much place for love as a part of marriage as a social institution.

If such marriages of convenience had been wholly acceptable to the marriageable young nobility there would have been no social problem and, indeed, no 'courtly romance' as I understand it. p.130

It is the contention of Evans that circumstances in society gave rise to a literature that confronts the opposition between the demands of society and the desires of the individual for personal fulfilment. The literature offers two solutions, either by presenting situations when a balance between the two is achieved in a marriage that is both loving and socially desirable, or by exalting the virtues of extra-marital love, which is enjoyed in defiance of the pressures of society. Both are idealisations, proposing an image of wish fulfilment uncommon in reality.

In a society practising dynastic marriage, love was a disruptive force, anti-social and extra-marital. p.130



FORMS OF SOCIAL AND PERSONAL FULFILMENT AND  
NON-FULFILMENT IN THE OLD FRENCH NARRATIVE LAIS

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CHAPTER FIVE: FORMS OF PERSONAL NON-FULFILMENT: CAUSES AND EFFECTS

From the previous chapter it emerges that there are three basic types of relationship in which personal fulfilment can be achieved: family relationships, usually between parents and children; chivalric or feudal relationships, as in the case of knights who are members of a same court or between a lord and a vassal; heterosexual love relationships. In the case of the first two categories - family and chivalric/feudal relationships - a personal fulfilment is achieved in tandem with social fulfilment. There exists in them a coincidence of the social and personal aspirations of the individuals involved, and of the expectations and demands that society places upon those individuals. The personal dimension, if included at all, appears inextricably bound up with the social implications of the relationship. Although the emotional dimension may be an important factor within these relationships, it is their social significance that receives the greater emphasis in the *lais*. This applies whether the relationships are in a state of fulfilment or non-fulfilment.

The ways in which there can be a breakdown in these relationships have been considered in Chapter III. In that case the focus was specifically of the social significance of these relationships, but given the established intertwining of the personal significance into this it is evident that to a large extent the same conclusions are to be drawn from considering the non-fulfilment of such relationships from a perspective of personal considerations. It seems, in consequence, unnecessary to reconsider them at any length in this chapter.

In contrast to these familial and chivalric/feudal relationships, we find the love relationships of the third category. We have seen that it is only in marriage that there can be a comparable fusion of the social and the personal. In the case of such conjugal relationships, however, the emphasis is more on the personal dynamic than on the social implications - although without discounting the latter. This allies it with the other heterosexual relationships featured in the *lais*. In these there is no fusion of love and society, rather a conflict between the two, although the social implications of these relationships is invariably acknowledged, it is primarily as personal relationships that they are presented in the *lais*.

Because of the crucial importance of these love relationships - marital and extra-marital - in the *lais* and because of the emphasis on their emotional significance, it is on these relationships that this chapter will concentrate.

There are basically two different types of situation that can be identified as forms of non-fulfilment in love. There are those situations that can be defined as involving a lack of love: the individual suffering from this has had no experience of fulfilment in love. On the other hand we find those situations which involve a loss of love, occurring after there has been some experience of fulfilment in love.

#### 1. Lack of Fulfilment in Love

There are four conditions that can separately come into play to determine that an individual is unable to achieve fulfilment in

love. In a small number of lais, we find characters who have no aspirations towards enjoying love. In an equally small number, we find characters who are aware of the lack of love in their lives and who yearn for such personal fulfilment, but in an undirected, abstract way. More numerous are those characters who love a particular person with the hope, but without the certainty of their love being reciprocated. The final group of lovers, who suffer from a lack of personal fulfilment, have achieved reciprocation in their love but are, nonetheless, prevented from finding true happiness and union in a relationship because of the opposition of others and the demands of society.

#### 1. The Individual's Lack of Interest in Love

The lack of interest in love and the lack of aspiration towards fulfilment in a love relationship is presented in the lais as a serious fault in a character. It appears as a deficiency resultant from the individual's immaturity, as a failure by the individual to fulfil his duty to Nature and to Love. Without any desire for love it is impossible for the individual to achieve any fulfilment at this level.

These are the points that emerge very clearly from the initial presentation of Guigemar. Despite his proven abilities as an active knight and loving son (Guigemar 37-56), Guigemar is seriously flawed by his total lack of interest in personal fulfilment in love<sup>1</sup>. There is for him no mitigating circumstance of ignorance or of lack of opportunity. Many young women, who are highly desirable being both beautiful and noble, offer him their love: -

Suz ciel n'out dame ne pucele  
Ki tant par fust noble ne bele,  
Se il d'amer la requēist,  
Ke volentiers nel retenist.  
Plusurs l'en requistrent suvent,  
Mais il n'aveit de ceo talent

Guigemar 59-64.

Guigemar's lack of fulfilment in a love relationship is, therefore, most obviously of his own choice. What is interesting here is the extent to which Guigemar's lack of interest in this direction is focused upon not simply as a personal matter but also as a matter of social concern. He is criticised both by friends and generally by strangers for his failure, which is considered to be an unnaturalness: -

Nuls ne se pout aparceveir  
Ke il volsist amur avoir:  
Pur ceo le tienent a peri  
E li estrange e si ami.

Guigemar 65-68.

Marie in her narrational voice reinforces this idea of the unnaturalness of Guigemar's attitude: -

De tant i out mespris Nature  
Ke unc de nule amur n'out cure.

Guigemar 57-58.

This sets fulfilment in love on a more fundamentally important plane than simply the personal or indeed the social. It elevates it to an element within a design of cosmic proportions, here defined as Nature, but which equally can be seen as Destiny in the context of this lai<sup>2</sup>. As we have seen from the previous chapter, it is indeed in Guigemar that Marie places greatest emphasis on the relationship between love and destiny. We see here that it is from the very beginning of the lai that there is this identification of the fulfilment of self through love with the fulfilment of one's destiny. In his lack of interest in love, Guigemar is not only failing to achieve personal fulfilment at the moment, but is also failing to accept even on an abstract level that love is a necessary

part of man's destiny as determined by Nature. In so doing, he is denying the power and the goodness of Nature.

It is possible that in the use of the term 'peri' (67), there is the suggestion of homosexuality. Marie, however, does not make this specific, and it would, I believe, be a misinterpretation of Marie's intention to take her criticisms against Guigemar as referring to a particular form of sexual practice<sup>3</sup>. What Marie is surely concerned with is Guigemar's failure to recognise the value of love at all, and her use of 'peri' indicates simply how seriously she views this fault. It is possible that much of Guigemar's fault lies in the excessive closeness of his relationship with his family, indicated by his return to his home and by the specific references to the fondness between him and his mother and sister (Guigemar 69-75). It is not stated explicitly, but it seems like that so great is his enjoyment of this familiar and sheltered relationship that Guigemar has no need for any other, thereby remaining in a frozen state of emotional immaturity.

Through her presentation of Guigemar and his guilt in his lack of love, Marie reveals her attitude towards love and the responsibility of the individual to confront the need to seek out fulfilment in love. Without the acknowledgement of the value of such love fulfilment, the individual cannot hope to develop fully within his pre-destined identity<sup>4</sup>.

Very much the same emphasis on the importance of fulfilment in love is to be found in the Lai du Trot. Here also the failure to recognise the value of love in abstract terms is perceived not simply as affecting the individual at a particular time and in a

particular way. The second group of ladies met by Lorois in the forest have failed to achieve any happiness at all as a result of their failure to seek fulfilment in love worthily. Here, as in Guigemar, love is an integral part of the fulfilment of the identity of the individual as a whole, and a failure to acknowledge this implies a failure to observe one's responsibilities to Nature. These ladies, in contrast to those of the first group who have loved well in their lifetime, are, when Lorois meets them in their afterlife, suffering from both physical and emotional distress: -

seules, que home n'i avoient,  
e en molt grief torment estoient.  
Trot 155-56.

Cascune sans estrief seoit,  
e si n'orent solliers ne chausces,  
ains estoient totes deschaucés.  
Les piés orent mal atornés,  
car eles les orent crevés,  
e de noir fros erent vestues,  
si avoient les ganbes nues  
dusc'as genols, e tos les bras  
avoient desnues des dras  
dusc'as coutes molt laidement;  
s'estoient en molt grief torment.  
Sor eles tonoit e negoit,  
e si grant orage faisoit  
que nus ne le puist endurer  
fors seulement de l'esgarder  
la grant paine ne la dolor  
qu'eles sueffrent e nuit e jor.  
Trot 176-92.

Their anguish arouses the horror of Lorois, but no sympathy from the author: -

Mais ce sachiez molt bien de fi  
qu'eles l'avoient deservi,  
Trot 157-58.

The fault, for which this is the well deserved punishment, lies in the attitude that they have held towards love. This is explained by one of the ladies in their midst; although recognising the fault now, it is too late now for them ever to achieve happiness or personal fulfilment. She says: -



'ce sont celes, ce s'achies bien,  
c'ainc por Amor ne fisent rien;  
ne ainc ne daignierent amer.  
Or lor fait molt chier comperer  
lor grant orgoil e lor posnee.  
Lasse! Jo l'ai molt comperee,  
ce poise moi que n'ai amé,  
que ja en yver, n'en esté  
n'arons nos repos ne sojor,  
c'adés ne soions en dolor!

Trot 265-74.

Their fault appears as a denial of the power and goodness of love, and we note that their suffering is meted out to them by the elemental forces of nature. The importance of fulfilment in love is therefore elevated to a significance far greater than simply an individual experience.

The authorial attitude to the failure of the ladies to appreciate the value of love is evident; the purpose of offering such an image of the horrors suffered by the ladies is purely didactic. Just as Lorois takes heed of the lady's warning, so is the reader intended to.

The author of Narcisus is also self-consciously didactic in his criticisms against Narcisus's behaviour and attitudes towards love. In these there is some development, culminating in Narcisus's awakening to the true significance of love. Initially, however, he is totally without interest in love. He is at this stage fifteen and interested only in hunting (Narcisus 113-20). His indifference towards love appears, then, as part of his immaturity. Both in terms of his emotional immaturity and his interest in hunting, Narcisus appears as a figure similar to Guigemar. Like Guigemar, Narcisus is actively keen to avoid the possibility of amorous advances made to him by ladies. In Narcisus, the pleasure the young man derives from the hunt is presented more specifically as so

absorbing that he feels no need for any other form of personal fulfilment: -

C'ert ses deduis et sa proière  
K'il puisse cerf u porc trover,  
Ne v'en poeut pas son coeur torner,  
D'amor n'a soing ne rien n'en set  
Dames en canbres fuit et het.

Narcisus 116-20.

There is also greater emphasis on Narcisus's immaturity, which as well as being emotional is to greater degree physical also. It is, indeed, on the grounds of his youth that he defends his repudiation of love. Thus he rejects Dané's offer of love saying: -

'N'apartient pas n'a moi n'a toi  
K'amer saçons ne tant ne quant,  
Car trop somes encor enfant.'

Narcisus 498-500.

This is, however, something of a false excuse; young they may be, but not too young to love, for despite Narcisus's attempts to deny it, there can be no doubting the sincerity of Dané's own love. It is clear, then, that the true reason for his refusal to acknowledge the possibility of love at his age is a stubbornness against it. This reveals itself in his assertion: -

'Je ne quier rien d'amer savoir.'

Narcisus 508.

He maintains this attitude towards love even when he is first affected by it himself, on catching sight of his reflection. Then he states: -

'D'Amors ne doi je riens savoir.'

Narcisus 739.

This is a reference not to the particular form of love that is awakening within him, and which should indeed be avoided, but love in general. It is love as an abstract notion that he is rejecting, denying the possibility of love's being in any way desirable. The excessive pride and the hardness of heart with which Narcisus asserts his entrenched attitude against love is condemned by the

author (Narcisus 529)<sup>5</sup>.

It is in these three lais - Guigemar, Trot and Narcisus - that characters are presented specifically in terms of their denial of the virtues of love. There are, however, a number of other characters in the lais whose lack of interest in love do appear to have a degree of importance. There are clear similarities between the character of Desiré at the beginning of Desiré and of Guigemar at the beginning of Guigemar. Here too is a young man who, having asserted his manhood as a knight, chooses to return to his family (Desiré 69-94). There is no criticism, implicit or explicit, of him, no suggestion of his deliberately denying the power or the value of love. There is, however, no suggestion either of his having any interest in love at this stage, of his aspiring to achieve such personal fulfilment. Rather he is shown finding his pleasures in a ride through the woods (Desiré 95-132). In recognising the similarities between his situation and interests at this stage and those of Guigemar, it is possible to see in Desiré a degree of emotional immaturity. This emerges more clearly from a reading of the lai as a whole in terms of Desiré's passage to emotional maturity, a stage finally reached when he has come to appreciate both the value of love itself and the value of commitment in love. Desiré, without any thoughts of love, appears, thus, at the beginning of the lai to be at the furthest extreme from that ultimate emotional maturity.

Lanval similarly depicts the development of the hero to his final maturity as a man wholly committed in his desire for fulfilment in love. When he is first introduced to the reader it is wholly in terms of his abilities as a knight, his loyalty as a vassal. His

commitment in social terms is, therefore, unquestionable; this is in contrast to the complete lack of reference to his having any interest in love. Thus, although there is none of the explicit criticism that is applied against Guigemar, it would, nevertheless, seem justified to see in Lanval an immature young man in whom an emotional dimension has not yet developed to encompass an interest in love.

Guingamor is a lai in the same tradition, tracing a progression in the self-awareness and attitudes of the young hero. Here the lack of love in Guingamor's life at the beginning of the lai is specifically referred to. He acknowledges that he does not love anybody and states very firmly that he has no interest in loving anybody at the moment: -

'ne quier ouan d'amor ovrer.'

Guingamor 86.

His rejection of love is made explicit, but the author extends no particular criticism against him. Neither does he introduce the notion of love as an abstract force, the power and virtue of which are to be recognised in the same terms as the power of Nature or Destiny. It is nonetheless true that Guingamor here reveals himself as an emotionally immature young man, for whom the relationship he enjoys with his uncle is so important that he has no interest in other forms of personal fulfilment.

## 2. Lack of Love Experienced as a Need by the Individual

Graelent has obvious similarities with Lanval, Desiré and Guingamor, in particular in terms of the presentation of her hero's development in his relation to love. The initial stance of Graelent places him,

however, somewhat apart from the protagonists of those lais. Graellent does not love anybody in particular, but this lack of love in his life is in no way derived from a rejection of love in abstract terms. On the contrary, if he is unwilling to give his love to any woman it is because of his standards of ideal love. This is expressed in his rejection of the Queen's advances as an attack on bad love: -

'Dame, dist il, je n'aimme pas,  
d'amors tenir n'est mie gas.  
Cil doit estre de mout grant pris  
qui s'entremet qu'il soit amis.  
Tel .VC. parolent d'amor,  
n'en sevent pas le pior tor,  
ne que est loiax druerie.  
Ains lor ragē e lor folie,  
perece, wisseuse e faintise  
enpire amor en mainte guise.  
Amors demande caastē  
en fais, endis e en pensē.  
Se l'uns des amans est loiax  
e li autre est jalox e faus,  
si est amors entr'ex fausee,  
ne puet avoir longe duree.  
Amors n'a song de compaignon;  
boin amors n'est si de dex non,  
de cors en cors, de cuer en cuer,  
autrement n'est prex a nul fuer.  
Tulles, qui parla d'amistiē,  
dist assēs bien en son ditiē  
que veut amis, ce veut l'amie,  
dont est boine la compaignie;  
s'ele le veut e il l'otroit,  
dont est la druerie a droit;  
puisque li uns l'autre desdit,  
ni a d'amors fors c'un despit.  
Assēs puet on amors trover,  
mais sens estuet al bien garder  
douçor e francise e mesure,  
- amors n'a de grand forfait cure -  
loialté tenir e prometre;  
pour çou ne m'en os entremetre.'

Graellent 73-106.

From this we are provided with an image of the sort of false love that is unworthy of fulfilment and which Graellent is determined to avoid. In his lack of experience in love Graellent might be similar to Lanval, Guingamor and Desiré, in his attitude to love he is very far from them, revealing a maturity that is the essential basis for

the enjoyment of fulfilment in love. His appreciation of the importance of good love makes him far more readily accessible to the forces of such love.

It is in Guigemar, that the importance of the individual's attitude is particularly stressed. From his initial, wholly negative attitude towards love in any terms, Guigemar is forced into recognising the desirability of love at an abstract level. This comes about through his encounter with the white doe, as it is she who makes him aware of his lack of love as a lacuna in him and as something that cannot be isolated from the rest of his being. Just as the physical pain caused by the arrow wound affects the whole of him and prevents him from living normally, so does the lack of love in him which is symbolised by the actual wound. The lack of love in him has existed as a part of his state of being for some time, but it is only now that he experiences this lack deeply at a psychological level. He is now forced into perceiving love not only as a desirable force, but as a necessary force for life. He now longs for love to fulfil his life, but in an undirected way, as an abstract ideal, although he is aware that it can only be found in one particular, but unknown woman (Guigemar 108-32)<sup>6</sup>.

In Yonec also it is only in such abstract terms that the lady can yearn for fulfilment in love. She recognises the value of love as a means to happiness, and is fully aware that this personal fulfilment is lacking from her marriage. She feels that love is something to which she has a right, but without knowing whether, or how such fulfilment could be found. Her yearnings for love are not directed towards any particular man, and are based only on old stories she has heard<sup>7</sup>. The vagueness of her aspirations for love is reflected in her prayers: -

'Mut ai sovent oï cunter  
Que l'em suleit jadis trover  
Aventures en cest païs  
Ki rehaitouent les pensis.  
Chevalier trovoent puceles  
A lur talent, gentes e beles,  
E dames truvoent amanz  
Beaus e curteis, pruz e vaillanz,  
Sì que blasmees n'en esteient  
Ne nul fors eles nes veeient.  
Sì ceo peot estrē e ceo fu,  
Sì unc a nul est avenu,  
Deus, ki de tut ad poëstē,  
Il en face ma volentē!

Yonec 91-104.

There can be no doubt as to the sympathy that Marie feels for her heroine, who as the archetypal mal mariée is wholly a victim of circumstance<sup>8</sup>, locked in a marriage which is a complete failure in personal terms<sup>9</sup> - we have seen that ideally marriage should be as much a form of personal fulfilment as a social institution. The responsibility for her lack of personal fulfilment in marriage lies primarily with the cruel husband. Blame is also attributable to her parents who forced her into a marriage of social convenience, indifferent to the impossibility of true love between the young girl and the old man<sup>10</sup>. The extent of the lady's unhappiness in her loveless existence is stressed: -

Mut ert la dame en grant tristur,  
Od lermes, od suspir e plur;  
Sa beuté pert en teu mesure  
Cume cele ki n'ad cure.  
De sei meisme mieuz vousist  
Que morz hastive la preisist.

Yonec 45-50.

Her suffering as a result of the lack of love in her life has overwhelmed her whole being, causing her to lose her beauty and to long for death in preference to such lovelessness.

Melion at the beginning of Melion, also suffers much unhappiness as a result of his lack of fulfilment in love. The circumstances determining his lovelessness are, however, very different. Like

Graelent, Melion is unwilling to give his love freely for the sake of an easy but meaningless gratification, upholding an ideal of how love ought to be: -

Il dist: J'a n'amerait pucele  
que tant seroit gentil ne bele,  
que nule autre home eüst amé,  
ne que de nul eüst parlé.

Melion 19-22.

The consequences of his expressing such an ideal are more extreme than he intends. By setting such high standards, he deprives himself of the chance of finding any fulfilment in love with the ladies of the royal court in which he lives. So angered are they by the conditions he imposes as the basis of a love relationship, that they all refuse to have any contact with him whatever: -

Cil ki le veu orent oï,  
en pluisors lieus le recorderent  
e as puceles le conterent,  
e qant les puceles l'oïrent  
molt durement l'enhaïrent.  
Celes ki es canbres estoient  
e ki la roïne servoient,  
dont il en ot plus de cent,  
en ont tenu .I. parlement:  
d'ient jamais ne l'ameront,  
n'encontre lui ne parleront,  
dame nel voloit regarder,  
ne pucelē a lui parler.

Melion 24-36.

Thus, Melion's conditions for a love relationship, based on his desire to avoid bad love and his aspirations towards good love, are turned against him. From having the control to state whom he would love and whom he would not, he has now been deprived of all such prerogative, and can have no realistic expectation of finding a woman to love so long as he remains at the court. The character of his lack of love has been fundamentally altered, as Melion fully realises, his complacency replaced by unhappiness: -

molt durement s'en asopli;

Melion 38.

So great is his wretchedness over his potentially permanent state of



lovelessness, that it overwhelms the whole of his existence. All interest in the knightly pursuits and social relationships that have occupied his life are now subsumed by his grief: -

ne voloit mais querre aventure,  
ne d'armes porter n'avoit cure;  
molt fu dolans, molt asopli;  
e de son pris alques perdi.

Melion 39-42.

From Melion's experiences we see how important is the attitude of the individual towards his own situation. Melion's initial state of lovelessness causes him little concern because it, nonetheless, allows the possibility of his achieving the fulfilment in love which he aspires. His actual situation, of lacking such fulfilment, does not change, but the loss of the hope of love causes him to despair. The shift in his emotional response to his situation is defined by the loss of control that he has over this situation. This distinction between state of being and state of mind is to be found repeatedly in the *lais*, as is the shift between hope and despair governed by the degree of control an individual feels himself to have over a situation.

### 3. Lack of Reciprocation in Love

The sense of lovelessness in abstract terms is limited to a small number of characters in the *lais*. More often, it is in a particularised way that the individual confronts a sense of lack of love fulfilment, for a love that is particularised, aroused by a particular person. The fear that the object of the love will not reciprocate is of concern to many of the characters in the *lais*. Distinct from this fear, which allows still for hope, is the fact of the love not being reciprocated, which allows for no hope but only despair.

From having no interest in love, through aspiring to love in an abstract way, Guigemar comes to the stage of loving a particular woman, with the hope, but no certainty, of this love being reciprocated. He has fallen in love with the lady at the time of their first meeting. Although Marie makes it clear to the reader that it is love that has struck him Guigemar(379-83), Guigemar himself is not at first aware that it is nascent love that he is experiencing. What he is aware of is the suffering: -

Mut suspire anguisusement.

Guigemar 384

and his need for the lady to be merciful towards him and to cure him of his pain: -

Pensis esteit e anguissus;  
Ne seit uncore que ceo deit,  
Mes nepurquant bien s'aperceit,  
Si par la dame n'est gariz,  
De la mort est seürs e fiz.  
'Allas, fet il, quel le ferai?  
Irai a li, si li dirai  
Que ele eit merci e pitie  
De cest cheitif descunseillé;  
S'ele refuse ma priere  
E tant seïtorgoilluse e fiere,  
Dunc m'estuet il a doel murir  
U de cest mal tuz jurs languir.'

Guigemar 394-406.

His first feelings of love contain no joy, or even anticipation of joy; all emphasis is on the anguish he suffers, the sleeplessness that is consequent of it (Guigemar 411-12). Although he does not initially understand the nature of his feelings, they are unequivocally those of unfulfilled love, particularly in the notion that if he is spurned by the lady he will die. Increasingly Guigemar's emotions focus upon their true source, as he visualises the lady's beauty and longs for her (Guigemar 413-18). Characteristic of his state, as one whose love is not reciprocated, is his sense of helplessness, his self-conscious dependence on the lady for any chance of solace or happiness. Central to his

suffering is his uncertainty: he has no knowledge whatever of what the lady might feel for him; this lack of certainty allowing at least the possibility that the love will be reciprocated and fulfilled<sup>11</sup>. Indeed, alongside the description of Guigemar's suffering is an insight into the lady's parallel experience of nascent love and of uncertainty, which is indicated specifically: -

Mes el ne seit s'il l'eime u nun,  
Guigemar 436.

Comparable to their experiences are those of Dané when she has first seen and fallen in love with Narcissus. Here too her suffering and her yearning for his love are characterised by the uncertainty of how he will respond to her love. The stress is very much on Dané's powerlessness in her love: -

Amors regarde cele part;  
Voi la douter, si lance un dart.  
La pucele se sent ferue;  
Tot maintenant s'est esperdue.  
Narcissus 147-50.

Dané is fully aware of her own importance, realising that it is from love that she is suffering: -

'Ahi! Amors, com es poisons,  
Com est ta segnorie grans!'  
Narcissus 159-60.

Her acquiescence to the power of love in no way diminishes the suffering it causes her at this stage (Narcissus 147-304). She, like Guigemar and the lady in Guigemar, suffers sleeplessness (Narcissus 181-235); she too retains the memory of the loved one's appearance (Narcissus 240-55; 283-87). She laments: -

'C'est la riens qui plus me fait mal  
Quant me membre de sa biauté.'  
Narcissus 240-41.

Fearful that she will never be able to enjoy the fulfilment in love to which she aspires, Dané is nonetheless obsessed with thoughts of Narcissus, yearning to be in his company, she cannot imagine how she

can survive without him: -

'E Dius! Porrai je vivre tant  
Ke j'en face auques mon talant -  
Que je soie de lui privee,'

Narcisus 289-91,

Again we find expressed the sentiment that without such fulfilment in love she would rather be dead: -

Et puis se vauroit estre morte.

Narcisus 302.

From this desperation for fulfilment in love, Dané builds her hopes of the possibility of her love being reciprocated and sanctioned by society to allow her to marry Narcisus. This is the expression of her ideal, but her hopes are restrained by the fears that such perfect and consummate fulfilment in love will be inaccessible to her: -

'Ja nen iert tuens!'

Narcisus 256.

Her fears are focussed primarily on the possibility of parental opposition to a marriage between her and Narcisus. She does, however, also recognise the danger of Narcisus's not reciprocating her love.

It is a measure of her desperate yearning for such fulfilment in love that she takes the risk of confronting Narcisus in order to see whether or not he will accept and reciprocate her passion. This is not a decision made lightly and is evidence of the extent to which she is overcome by love, as the author stresses: -

Merveille est d'Amor qui tant fait,  
Qui tot embrace et tot atrait!

Narcisus 405-06.

Love so dominates her whole being that it forces Dané to lay aside all the values that she would rationally choose to uphold. Through her lengthy soliloquy, the author emphasises just how much of a

surrender of her rational self is involved, just how important are to her the notions of duty to her family, of honour, of modesty. In going to ask Narcisus to love her, she is renouncing all of these principles that have been essential to her (Narcisus 333-424). In her desperation, in the anguish of her uncertainty, there is, nonetheless, a place for hope that her love will in fact be reciprocated and that she will be able to enjoy fulfilment in love.

However much Dané's passion may be contrary to reason and to certain principles of honourable conduct, the author clearly intends the reader to have sympathy for Dané in her suffering. This is obvious from his insistence on the omnipotence of love, against which she is powerless. In providing her with justifications for her love, he presents the possibility that a relationship between her and Narcisus might indeed be desirable and worthy of fulfilment. The key to such fulfilment lies in her encounter with Narcisus, and it is upon this encounter that Dané's hopes are focused.

For Dané, however, unlike for Guigemar, the period of anguish and unreciprocated love is not brought to an end by the declaration of her love. Her love is scorned by Narcisus, who refuses ever to love her (Narcisus 489-510). Dané's suffering turns, in consequence, from desperation, in which there exists nonetheless a degree of hope, to hopeless despair: -

'Lasse, fait ele, or sur je morte,  
Que nule riens ne me conforte.'

Narcisus 541-42.

Her state of unfulfilled love is no longer due to uncertainty, but to Narcisus's refusal to reciprocate it; this is far more extreme as it allows her no control over her lovelessness. The extent of her dependence on Narcisus for fulfilment in love and happiness now

emerges fully, underlined by Dané's lamentations of his treatment of her (Narcisus 559-97). The author makes it clear that his sympathies are with Dané, and that Narcisus is wrong in being so disdainful of her love: -

Dius! Si dur cuer et si felon!  
Narcisus 529.

Even in discovering that Narcisus is not the good man she has hoped him to be (Narcisus 250-55), Dane is not freed from her love for him. The stranglehold that love has on her appears more cruel than ever, now that there is so much less chance of her ever being able to find personal fulfilment through it. She bemoans this fact: -

'Ja l'ain jou trop - et plus encor,  
Voire, par Diu - et voul amer.  
Je ne le puis entroblier.'  
Narcisus 576-78.

'Nel puis laiscier, nel pui gerpir,  
Ne me puis de s'amor partir.  
Ne sai por quoi, si m'en merveil.'  
Narcisus 587-89.

She can see no escape for herself from this despair of unrequited love, which will continue until her death. With no hope of receiving from Narcisus the solace that she needs, she turns in her bitterness to a revenge that will make Narcisus suffer as much as she does. She asks the gods that he too will suffer the anguish of unrequited love (Narcisus 616-26).

Such an experience has been destined for Narcisus from birth (Narcisus 47-53), when he was taken by his mother to a soothsayer who predicted that he would die if he saw his own reflection. The fulfilment of this prediction nonetheless occurs directly as a response by the gods to Dané's prayers: -

Li diu ne l'ont pas mesole:  
Bien sera fet quanqu'ele prie.  
Narcisus 627-28.

There is a fundamental difference between the suffering of unrequited love experienced by Narcissus and that experienced by Dané. Whereas there could be a possibility of her love for Narcissus being a good and happily fulfilled love, there can be no such possibility for Narcissus's love. Whereas her love fails to be fulfilled because of Narcissus's rejection of it - by, in other words, an external force - his love is by its very nature doomed. Narcissus's experience of unreciprocated love develops nonetheless in the same two stages as that of Dané. Because of the fundamental difference between the two loves, there is, indeed, particular irony in the superficial similarities. For both the object of their love is the same - Narcissus - and for both it is a love aroused at first sight.

Narcissus falls in love with himself for his beauty on seeing his reflection in a pool, without at first realising that it is he (Narcissus 651-79). It is profoundly and painfully that he is struck by this feeling of love, a love which he is powerless to control as it cast upon him by the God of Love specifically to punish him for his negative attitude towards love: -

C'est sa biauté qu'illoques voit  
Et il meismes se deçoit!  
C'est cil qui or blasmoit Amor;  
Or l'a ja mis en tel freor.

Narcissus 673-76.

Narcissus longs for fulfilment in this love, hoping that the object of passion will respond favourably to it, but fearful of being rejected. Just as Dané did, he suffers in his uncertainty (Narcissus 677-796). He weeps and sighs, feels both hot and cold and fears he will die if the object of his desires does not return his love. He says: -

'Ains que demain voie soleil,

Me porra on ci trover mort,  
S'avoir ne puis autre confort!'

Narcisus 784-86.

As with Guigemar, there is a period of such suffering before Narcisus realises that the source of it is love, a love he cannot escape despite his continued resistance to it. He says: -

'Est donc Amors qui si me maine  
Et me fait traire mal et painne?  
D'Amors ne doi je riens savoir.'

Narcisus 737-39.

'Amors est mastre qui me cuist,  
Qui dedens le cors m'art et cuist.'

Narcisus 775-76.

However distraught he may be in suffering such overwhelming love, however much he may lament against his fate to the God of Love and reproach the face he sees and loves for its lack of response and apparent disdain, he retains through this period the hope that his love will be reciprocated. It is with this hope that he continues to plead his suit. The parallels with Dané's own hopes in offering her love to Narcisus are obvious.

The moment of Narcisus's realising that his hopes are doomed comes when he tries to kiss the reflection. On discovering that it is his own image that he loves his desperation turns to a far deeper despair: -

Lors connoist qu'il est deceús  
Et voit que c'est unbres qu'il ainme;  
Moult par se blasme et fol se clanme  
Narcisus 836-38.

He exclaims: -

'J'aim moi meisme! C'est folie!'  
Narcisus 871.

The hopelessness of his love is more extreme than that experienced by Dané, and this is reflected in the horror with which he responds to the discovery of the true nature of his love and the implications



of it: -

Et quant plus est desesperans,  
Tant est l'angoisce assés plus grans  
Dont se tormente, dont s'ocist;  
Ne set que fait, ne set que dist.

Narcisus 845-48.

Narcisus knows that for him this love spells death, remembering the soothsayer's prediction: -

'Bien sai que voir dist li devins.  
Ma mors est pres; ceu est la fins,'

Narcisus 849-50.

The dimension of inevitable death within this impossible love highlights the power of the forces of destiny and of the gods over the lives of individuals. It also points to the extent to which the individuals are responsible for their own fate. Although Dané is very clearly a victim of love throughout, as is stressed in the text, Narcisus is to a greater degree to blame both for his own unhappiness and for the unhappiness he causes Dané. He has been warned against seeing his own reflection, and, knowing the danger, he should have avoided such a situation; to this extent he is responsible for his own fate. More specifically reprehensible is the behaviour that causes the gods in their anger to precipitate him into this situation. If he had not been scornful of love and if he had accepted Dané's love, reciprocating it with his own, the possibility of fulfilment in love would have been accessible to both. There is no justification offered in defence of his withholding his love from Dané as categorically as he does. The fault remains unremittingly his, the fault of his excessive pride and complacency<sup>12</sup>. This the author makes clear in the terms of the moral of his lai: -

Ke tost en poeut avoir damage  
Par son orgeul, par son outrage.

Narcisus 23-24.

Narcisus qui fu mors d'amer

Nous doit essanple demostrer:  
Amors blasmoit et sa poisçance,  
Ki puis en prist aspre venjance,  
Narcisus 35-38,

Narcisus's essential fault, the crucial basis of his pride, lies in his failure to appreciate either the virtues or the powers of love as an abstract force (God). For disdaining the opportunity to enjoy the pleasures of fulfilled love, as offered to him by Dané, he deserves to suffer the agonies of unfulfilled love.

The author draws attention to how bitterly tragic are the consequences of Narcisus's attitude and behaviour by focusing on the potential for happiness that exists in love when it is reciprocated: -

Amors ke Nature consent  
Dequ'ele a anbedeus se prent  
Et de tout a lor plaisir,  
[Si] est bien biaux a mai[n]tenir.  
Narcisus 25-28,

That such could have been the love fulfilment enjoyed by Narcisus and Dané is indicated at the end of the lai. When it is already too late and Narcisus is dying, he comes finally to appreciate the love offered by Dané, and to perceive that a good relationship could have existed between them (Narcisus 941-71). This underlines the extent to which Narcisus is to blame for neither him nor Dané being able to enjoy fulfilment in love while they are alive. They are united in death, but this in no way diminishes the anguish of the non-fulfilment of their love: it is precisely because of the intensity of their suffering in hopeless love that they die, unable to continue in a loveless life (Narcisus 972-1010).

It is by means of his references in the final section both to the possible love relationship they could have enjoyed to Narcisus's

fault, that the author focuses the reader's attention on the fundamental differences between the experiences of Narcissus and those of Dané. These emerge also from the fact of superficial similarities, similarities which lead the reader into comparing - and therefore contrasting - the two lovers and the love to which they each aspire.

Dané, far more than Narcissus, arouses the author's sympathy in her yearning for fulfilment in love. Both she and Narcissus are victims of the power of the gods, and, in particular, of the intervention of the god of love. But whereas Dané appears wholly as a victim in her submission to domination of love, Narcissus is less so. Dané can be justified in her love and her hopes of finding fulfilment in it, if such fulfilment is never attained it is because of her powerlessness against Narcissus's indifference. For Narcissus, it is the very nature of his love, with his own reflection as its object, that denies him the chance of ever finding fulfilment in it<sup>13</sup>.

In Narcissus, then, we can distinguish four different basic forms of unreciprocated love: -

- a) Love that is unfulfilled because there is no certainty that it will be reciprocated, but is worthy of being fulfilled.
- b) Love that is unfulfilled because there is no certainty that it will be reciprocated, and which is unworthy of being fulfilled.
- c) Love that is unfulfilled because it is known to be unreciprocated, the love object unjustifiably withholding his love.
- d) Love that is unfulfilled, because it can never be reciprocated, being of its nature impossible.

In the other lais we find variations on these forms of unreciprocated love. The yearning for love experienced by both Guigemar and the lady he loves is clearly of the first kind, a short-lived period of uncertainty, brought to an end by Guigemar's declaration of love.

Similar to this is the initial stage in Guilliadun's love for Eliduc. She has fallen in love with him for his prowess, with no certainty that he will accept or return her love (Eliduc 265-402). The possibility of a relationship developing between them becomes all important to her and she is overwhelmed by fears that Eliduc will not reciprocate her love and that she will never find the fulfilment to which she is aspiring (Eliduc 327-50). Characteristically, these fears prevent her from sleeping: -

Tute la nuit veillat issi,  
Ne reposa ne ne dormi.

Eliduc 331-32.

She is well aware that it is her unfulfilled love for Eliduc that is the cause of her insomnia (Eliduc 337-42) and insists on the depth of her need of Eliduc's love if she is to have any happiness in her life: -

'Tant par est sages e curteis  
Que, s'il ne m'aime par amur,  
Murir m'estuet a grant dolor.'

Eliduc 348-50.

'Si s'en irat hastivement,  
Jeo remeindrai cume dolente.'

Eliduc 390-91.

'E si il n'ad de m'amur cure,  
Mut me tendrai a maubaillie:  
Jamés n'avrai joie en ma vie.'

Eliduc 398-400.

Throughout her conversation with the chamberlain she returns to her dependence on Eliduc's love for her happiness. However much she might be concerned with justifying a possible relationship between

them on grounds of social propriety, it is to the question of Eliduc's response to her that she returns. She considers what she would be able to offer him in return for his love: -

'Si par amur me veut amer  
E de sun cors asseürer,  
Jeo feral trestut sun pleisir;  
Si l'en peot grant bien avenir:  
De ceste tere serat reis.'

Eliduc 343-46.

Although aware of the social implications of a relationship with Eliduc, she does not appear seriously concerned with the possibility that the demands of society will be obstacles to the fulfilment of such a relationship. All these concerns are subordinate to her real fear that Eliduc will not reciprocate her love. The hopes that are implicit within her uncertainty are encouraged by the chamberlain, who urges her to take the initiative in making clear her own feelings to Eliduc, as the only means of discovering whether there is any chance of fulfilment in her love (Eliduc 355-64). It is indeed her own declaration of love that ensures that her period of anguish is only a brief prelude to the relationship itself.

For Equitan there is a period of uncertainty, from the time of his falling in love with the seneschal's wife to his revealing this love to her and persuading her to reciprocate it. As in the other cases considered, the onset of love is more painful than joyful: -

Pur la dame l'ad si suspris,  
Tuz en est murnes e pensis.

Equitan 59-60.

In his own analysis of his situation, Equitan focuses upon his uncertainty about the lady's feelings and the need for him to confront her if he is to overcome this uncertainty: -

Après parlat e dist: 'De quel  
Sui en estrif e en effrei?  
Uncor ne sai ne n'ai seü  
S'ele fereit de mei sun dru;

Mes j'el savrai hastivement.'

Equitan 91-95.

As for Guigemar and Guilliadun, this period of uncertainty is replaced by relief and a period of personal fulfilment despite the self-evident unworthiness of Equitan's love.

The queens in Lanval, Graelent and Guingamor are less happy in the outcome of their declarations of love. In each case her hopes of a love relationship with the young hero of the lai are dashed by his repudiation of her advances.

In Lanval, Marie moves the action swiftly from the Queen's falling in love with Lanval to her expressing this love and being repulsed (Lanval 259-302). She is, thus, not shown at the initial stage of yearning for a love that may or may not be reciprocated, but only at the later stage of knowing that she has no chance of fulfilment in this love. Rejected in the same unyielding way that Dané is by Narcisus, the Queen's position is, nonetheless, very different: the nature of the love she offered and sought being shameful and unworthy of fulfilment, she inspires no sympathy for her unrequited love, especially in the circumstances of her response to Lanval's refusal. What anguish she may feel is subsumed by anger against Lanval:

La reine s'en part a tant,  
En sa chambre s'en vait plurant;  
Mut fu dolente e curuciee  
De ceo k'il l'out si avilliee.

Lanval 303-06.

Her disappointment retains no trace of her love for Lanval in its metamorphosis into malevolence which is expressed in her turning Arthur against his loyal vassal (Lanval 303-28).

In this case the reader's sympathy is in no way directed to the predatory Queen, but entirely to the hapless hero who with every justification refuses to reciprocate her love.

This is equally true for the analogous confrontation between queen and hero in Guingamor. Here again there is no suggestion that the Queen goes through a period of fearfulness before declaring her love to Guingamor; she evidently feels that the fact of her love in itself necessitates beyond question that Guingamor will accept and reciprocate it (Guingamor 41-100).

La roïne li dist: 'Amis,  
ne soiez mie si eschis;  
moi devez vos tres bien amer,  
je ne faz mie a refuser,  
car je vos aim de mon corage  
et ameraï tout mon aage.'

Guingamor 87-92.

She may have no doubts as to the purity of her love or its worthiness, but it is Guingamor who is the one commended in his refusal to countenance a love relationship such as the one she proposes: -

Li chevaliers s'est perpensez,  
si respondi comme senez:

Guingamor 93-94.

In her, as in the Queen in Lanval, her disappointment at being rejected puts to an end any notions of love for the young man that she has had. These are replaced by anger and a desire for revenge, but also, we have seen, a degree of remorse, albeit limited, derived from her realisation of the wrongness of the love to which she aspired (Guingamor 121-26).

In Graelent there is the same abruptness of transition from the Queen's falling in love with the young hero to declaring this love, without scruples and with full expectation of instant gratification

(Graelent 30-33). There are, however, two stages in her response to being rejected. Despite the evidence that Graelent does not and will not reciprocate her love, she continues for a period still to love him and to retain hopes in her sorrow: -

La roïne l'en vit aler,  
s' commença a sospirer,  
dolante est molt, ne set que faire,  
ne s'en voloit par tant retraire.

Graelent 129-32.

She continues, therefore, to seek ways of arousing his love, sending him messages and gifts (Graelent 133-36). It is only in the face of Graelent's continued, and wholly justified, indifference, that the Queen's longings are turned to despair and directly to anger and hatred against Graelent: -

La roïne molt l'enhaï  
quant ele a lui del tot failli;

Graelent 137-38.

We see, then, that despite the similarities in the presentation of the rebuffed queen episode in these three lais - Lanval, Guingamor, Graelent - there are variations in the actual response of the queen to the rebuff, with the variation in Graelent possibly the most striking, contributing nothing to the narrative and nothing of relevance to the characterisation.

In the Lai de l'Ombre, it is, rather, with unwavering love and a determination not to give up hope, that the hero confronts the apparent unwillingness of the lady to reciprocate his love. His efforts to win her love form indeed the core of the lai. Initially the knight is presented, struck by the dart of love and yearning for this love to be reciprocated (Ombre 128-211): -

'Las!' fet il, 'se je sui amis,  
que sera ce, s'el n'est amie?  
Je ne sai, ne je ne voi mie,  
comment je puisse vivre un jor!'

Ombre 166-69.



From the first instant of love, the knight is thus conscious of this need for fulfilment in this love if life is to have any worth for him. Like Guigemar and Dané, he visualises the object of his love: -

Li sens, la debonneretez,  
la grant biauté de son cler vis  
li est, ce li est bien avis,  
devant ses eulz et jor et nuit.

Ombre 140-43.

Conventionally also, his newly discovered obsession with love prevents him from sleeping, and from participating with any pleasure in the other activities of knightly existence: -

'Deduiz d'errer ne de sejour  
ne m'i puet mon mal alaschier,'

Ombre 170-71.

He recognises his dependence upon the lady's mercifully accepting his love if he is to be relieved of this agony of unreciprocated love (Ombre 189-97). All these aspects are recognisable symptoms experienced by other characters in the *lais*.

In his desperation for his love to be fulfilled, the knight goes to the lady and declares his love, insisting upon the suffering he endures so long as it remains unreciprocated (Ombre 350-579). She, however, withholds her love from him, increasing his desperation: -

Que qu'il puist dire ne prometre,  
a ce ne li puet rien valoir  
qu'il en doie ja joie avoir  
de li, si ne set qu'il face.  
Li vermaus li monte en la face  
et les lermes du cuer as eulz,

Ombre 476-81.

The anguish of this disappointment does not, however, tilt him into despair, relentlessly determined to overcome the obstacle of the lady's reluctance to accept and return his love, and finally succeeding as we have seen in the previous chapter.

In Tyolet and Doon the young knights also have to make great efforts

before they can achieve fulfilment in love. In both cases the obstacles are set up by the ladies themselves, in the form of the conditions imposed upon suitors. In neither case is the emotional dimension of their striving to win the lady highlighted, although in Doon at least the final outcome is, we have seen, a love match.

In Chaitivel, on the other hand, the desire for personal fulfilment is the essential factor motivating the four young knights in their efforts to win the love withheld by the lady (Chaitivel 41-70). Their love, the extent of their efforts are stressed, so also and in particular is their total dependence for their happiness upon the whims of the lady, who is endowed with all the rights to grant or hold back her love. In this case the lady's withholding of her love from all her suitors is not due to a conscious repugnance against love as such, but an inability to choose which of the knights is more worthy of her love (Chaitivel 49-58). As suggested in the previous chapter, the true fault lies in the standards of love subscribed to by the characters in the lai and which are in contradiction of those usually upheld in Marie's lais<sup>14</sup>.

In Conseil, in a similar situation of the lady withholding her love from a number of suitors, the emphasis is on those aspects by which a man can be judged unworthy of the fulfilment in love to which he aspires. From this, we see that the lady is justified in not reciprocating the love offered to her. Excessive pride is particularly singled out as a fault; the knight who appears as the author's spokesman says: -

'Quar certes grant folie embrace  
Cil qui du tout cuide estre sages.'  
Conseil 190-91.

'Mais cil est trop mal afaitiez

Qui se vante c'est grant folie;

Conseil 204-05.

Equally undeserving of fulfilment in love is the man who is too public in his declarations of love. The knight says: -

'N'est mie sages qui fera  
S'amor crier a la bretesche;

Conseil 134-35.

It is less the nature of the love of these suitors that makes them unworthy of fulfilment in love than their conduct in love.

Unique among the instances in the *lais* of love that is unfulfilled because it is unreciprocated is that of Muldumarec in Yonec. On coming to the lady, he tells her of the yearning he has had to love her and be loved by her: -

'Jeo vus ai lungement amee  
E en mun quor mut desiree;'

Yonec 127-28.

He has been totally dependent upon the lady, not only upon her acceptance of his love, but also for the opportunity even of expressing this love. In other *lais* lovers have expressed their sense of impotence to determine their chances of fulfilment in love, in difference from those situations Muldumarec's chances of fulfilment are not governed consciously by the object of his love but by a power of fate against which both he and she are powerless.

Considering the different situations in these *lais* we see how common is the experience of some degree of suffering due to a love that is not reciprocated. The terms by which this suffering is experienced are highly conventionalised: the same insomnia, obsessiveness about the loved one, the preference for death rather than a loveless existence are to be found repeatedly in the *lais*. The incapacitating nature of this anguish highlights how essential

reciprocity is for a relationship to have a chance of fulfilment.

The period of unreciprocated love experienced - and suffered - by an individual may be of short duration, requiring only the individual to declare his/her love for it to be accepted and returned. The individual may, however, be condemned to a longer lasting or even permanent state of unrequited love, if the object of the love fails to respond positively to such a declaration of love. This plight of unrequited love is treated more or less sympathetically by the author depending on the circumstances. In some cases, the rebuff appears unjustified and the individual who suffers it is presented entirely as a victim of the overwhelming power of love and of a cruel indifference of the love object. In other instances, by contrast, it is either the nature of the love aspired to or the faults of character of the individual aspiring to fulfilment in love that determine the love as unworthy of ever being reciprocated.

#### 4. Social Pressures as an Obstacle to Fulfilment in Love

Although clearly essential if there is to be any fulfilment in love, reciprocity does not ensure that a relationship will be free to develop to the extent desired by the lovers. External forces, in the form of social pressures or the opposition of a particular person, are often applied to limit the potential of development in a relationship.

This is the case in Deus Amanz, in which there can be no doubt as to the degree of love between the young couple. Although able to enjoy some happiness in their relationship, increasingly this appears to them as unsatisfactory in contrast with the complete and

unrestricted fulfilment to which they aspire: -

La souffrance mut lur greva,  
Deus Amanz 75.

The restrictions imposed upon the relationship are, we have seen, due entirely to the attitude of the father. These restrictions are not, however, such that the love of the loves is necessarily condemned to permanent stagnation; in their desperation for fulfilment in their love there is the possibility of hope, as the lovers are themselves aware, and which they seek to exploit, albeit unsuccessfully.

In Vair Palefroï the limitations imposed upon the couple in their love are also imposed by the girl's father, with far more crucial consequences; the contact between the lovers being minimal, the anguish of their longing for fulfilment in love is all the greater: -

Li uns voit l'autre escharsement,  
Quar trop cruel devement  
Avoit entre ces deus amanz.

Vair Palefroï 219-21.

Like the lovers in Deus Amanz, Guillaume and the young girl in Vair Palefroï do not initially feel totally powerless in the face of the father's repression. The potential for fulfilment in the relationship appears to exist within the scope of their initiative, if Guillaume in declaring his love can persuade the girl's father to allow them to marry. The true impotence of the lovers to control the development of their relationship towards the degree of fulfilment to which they aspire appears gradually as the father becomes increasingly assertive in his opposition to the match. Guillaume's longing for such happiness in love shifts through stages of desperation and despair as he comes to realise the extent of this dependence on the will of the father. It is, thus, with the fear and uncertainty, but, nonetheless, with hope that he first

approaches the father: -

Venu li est en son corage,  
Ou tort a joie ou tort a rage,  
Qu'a l'ancien parler ira  
Et sa fille li requerra  
A moillier, que que il aviegne,  
Quar il ne set ~~que~~ il deviegne  
Por la vie que il demaine:

Vair Palefroi 235-41.

This is a combination of emotions similar to that experienced by a lover first deciding to reveal his feelings to a loved one. His suit rejected by the girl's father, Guillaume's disappointment in no way diminishes his love or his desire for fulfilment in love: -

Li chevaliers ot molt grant honte  
De ce que il ot entendu:  
Il n'i a lors plus attendu,  
Ainz prist congié, si s'en repere;  
Mes il ne set qu'il puisse fere,  
Quar Amors le maine et destraint,  
De quoi molt durement se plaint.

Vair Palefroi 342-48.

Guillaume's tenacity in the face of this rejection is comparable to that of the knight in Ombre; while he still feels the possibility of influencing his own situation he retains the hope of achieving fulfilment in his love. His hopes lie in the chance of the support of his uncle to overcome the father's opposition. It is only when this last effort open to him fails, and the girl is apparently lost to him because of the marriage arranged between her and the uncle, that Guillaume despairs: -

Si est espris de duel et d'ire,  
Ne sot que fere ne que dire.  
De grant duel demener ne cesse,

Vair Palefroi 819-21.

His despair is paralleled by that of the girl, who is equally affected by the sense of impotence: -

'Bien sai que sanz joie morroie  
Et que sanz vie remanroie.'

Vair Palefroi 625-26.

La pucele se dementoit  
En icel point, quar molt estoit

A grant mesaise, ce sachiez,  
Quar ses cuers ert si enlaciez  
En l'amor au bon bachelor

Vair Palefroi 645-49.

It is the intensity of their love that causes them both to suffer so much, and the knowledge that neither the intensity nor the quality of this love can secure the union and happiness to which they aspire. The father's opposition to their marriage can do nothing to destroy the love itself, but is all-powerful in preventing the lovers from achieving fulfilment in a relationship, or apparently so at least.

Although able to enjoy far greater freedom in their initial relationship, the lovers in Milun are also ultimately powerless to achieve the degree of fulfilment in their love which they would desire. The pressures of the opposition of society to such an extra-marital relationship appear less directly as restrictions upon its development; but the lovers' awareness of the force of social opposition reveals itself through their anxieties and their need for concealment (Milun 55-64). Thus despite the considerable degree of pleasure with which they are able to pursue their relationship at this stage, the lovers are unable to prevent it from being stunted by the fact of their necessary submission to the powers of social authority.

In Eliduc, it is even more evidently the fear of social opposition rather than direct evidence of such opposition that curtails the development of the relationship between Eliduc and Guilliadun, both Eliduc and Guilliadun expressing scruples about social propriety of such a relationship. Such scruples are also expressed by Dané, in her initial hesitations about pursuing fulfilment in her love for

Narcissus. She fears that it will be the opposition of her father and of society in general that will come between her and such personal fulfilment (Narcissus 341-54). This, she fears, will be the source of her powerlessness over her own fate; we see that in fact the obstacles to her happiness come not from outside the relationship but from the withholding of love by Narcissus himself.

The differences between these different situations set into relief the essential similarity between them all. Even for those lovers who achieve a considerable degree of fulfilment in their relationship, suffering little in a direct way from the opposition of society, restrictions upon the natural development of that relationship are unavoidable. This is evidenced by the lovers' own awareness of their impotence to achieve absolute fulfilment in their love without the sanction of society.

Such restrictions are implicit also in adulterous relationships; however, as these are presented in the *lais*, the force of social opposition is experienced less as preventing any fulfilment in love than as bringing about a rupture in an already existing relationship, hence they will be considered later in this chapter.

## II. Loss of Personal Fulfilment in Love

Central to the situations that have been considered so far in this chapter is that fulfilment in love is something that has not been fully experienced. It is yearned for as a possibility in the future, or despaired of as being unattainable. In contrast, the situations to be considered in this section occur after a degree of fulfilment has been enjoyed. There is, therefore, a sense of loss



as well as a yearning for a further chance of fulfilment in love in the future. There are, nonetheless, basic similarities between these two types of experience: in both there can be different stages of desperation and despair; in both the cause for the non-fulfilment of a relationship can be either in a lack of reciprocity between the lovers, or in the pressures of society.

1. The Collapse of a Love Relationship for Personal Reasons:

Non-Reciprocity

In a small number of cases it is possible to attribute the responsibility for the collapse of a relationship wholly to one of the partners.

This is the case in Melion, in which Melion appears utterly as the innocent victim of his wife's betrayal. In the three years of their marriage, he has been a loving, faithful husband, and at no time more manifestly so than at the time when she abandons him. The irony of her betrayal as a response to his ultimate gesture of love in transforming him into a wolf has already been noted (Melion 133-204). Melion's initial reaction to the discovery of this desertion is one of bewilderment: -

Molt fu dolans, ne set que face,  
qant il ne le troeve en la place.  
Melion 215-16.

In his wretchedness, he has no more interest in life: -

car de sa vie n'avoit cure.  
Melion 226.

Like the rebuffed queens in Lanval, Graelent and Guingamor, his sorrow in rejection becomes anger, his earlier love replaced by hatred. He has no desire to be reconciled with her, seeks only to

avenge himself against her. So intense is Melion's hatred against his perfidious wife that when he sees her again he tries to kill her (Melion 491-94). It is evident that from the very moment of the wife's betrayal there has been a complete and irreconcilable collapse of their relationship, with no love surviving on either side.

Very similar to this is the collapse of the marriage in Bisclavret. Here too, the rupture in the relationship is brought about by the betrayal of the wife after a period of apparently happy and loving marriage. Marie allows some sympathy for the wife in her horror over her husband's being a werewolf (Bisclavret 97-103), but hers is nonetheless a fault of crucial disloyalty against her husband<sup>15</sup>.

Issi fu Bisclavret trahiz  
E par sa femme maubailiz.

Bisclavret 125-26.

The focus is entirely on the physical and social consequences for Bisclavret of this unwifely betrayal; no insight is offered into Bisclavret's immediate response at an emotional level. It becomes apparent, however, that, as for Melion, Bisclavret, having lost his wife's love in such a way, has no desire for a reconciliation; his love, also, has turned to hatred, expressed in his attack upon her (Bisclavret 231-36). Here again the collapse of the relationship, brought about by the unjustified withdrawal of love by the wife, is complete and permanent.

In Doon, there is a reversal of roles, in that it is the husband who chooses to abandon the wife. The sorrow of the wife over the loss of the man she loves is manifest: -

La dame pleure e grant duel fet  
de ce que ses amis s'en vet,

Doon 167-68.

Her entreaties for Doon to stay and her accusations of unjust betrayal having failed to move Doon, who leaves with no indication of love for her or that he will return. Despite being abandoned in so peremptory a way, the wife's love continues after Doon's departure, as does her sorrow over this love being unreciprocated: -

Molt est dolenz e molt se plaint;  
Doon 188.

Although the initiative in leaving is Doon's and the wife feels herself to be an innocent victim, the responsibility for the collapse of the relationship is shared equally by both spouses. Thus, the author indicates, through Doon, that she is not wholly a victim in her loss of love (Doon 264-67). It is not, however, a permanent rupture of her marriage that she is forced to endure in consequence of her fault of pride.

Although the image of marriage portrayed in Eliduc is very different from that in Doon, there is, nonetheless, a similarity in the manner of the collapse of the two marriages. In both instances the act of severance is made by one partner, although it is the other who is in fact responsible for the failure of the relationship. Thus it is Doon and Guildeluëc who effect the actual break in response to the evidence of a lack of commitment by the proud princess and by Eliduc. The extent of the fault of the proud princess is stressed; in the case of Eliduc we have seen that things are more complex, as Marie attempts to balance criticism and sympathy for her hero. Eliduc retains a sense of loyalty to Guildeluëc and to their marriage, but he has, nonetheless, removed his emotional commitment from his relationship with Guildeluëc by falling in love with Guilliadun. This is involuntary - Eliduc being powerless against the impact of passion - but the consequences are undeniably the

collapse of his marriage to Guildeluëc as a love relationship: for neither of them can it provide any possibility of personal fulfilment. This is evident to Guildeluëc from the time of Eliduc's first return to Brittany, when she discovers that her love for Eliduc is no longer reciprocated: -

Sa femme en ot le ~~que~~or dolent,  
Ne sot mie que ceo deveit;  
A sei meïsmes se pleigneit.

Eliduc 718-20.

Guildeluëc's evident unhappiness over the loss of Eliduc's love does not destroy her own love for him; at no point does she express bitterness or reproach against him even when, on discovering Guilliadun, she realises the extent of his infidelity. Rather her behaviour as spurned wife is characterised by a degree of generosity unique among the characters in the lais. It is for the sake of Eliduc's chances of happiness in his new love for Guilliadun that Guildeluëc severs the marital bond tying him to her (Eliduc 1006-1144). Thus the permanent ending of the marriage appears as an act of self-sacrifice, which allows some of the responsibility for breach to be diverted away from Eliduc.

In other lais apportioning of responsibility for a breach in a relationship appears more clearly in terms of the failure of one partner prompting the other to withdraw. This pattern as the basis for the collapse of a love relationship is to be found repeatedly in those lais which are concerned with the love between a mortal and a being from the Other World. In these instances the failure of commitment to love by the mortal lover is expressed by a failure to observe the 'geis' that is crucial to the relationship. The 'geis' is a survival from Celtic literature and in the lais it takes the form of a condition or prohibition imposed by the supernatural lover

upon the mortal<sup>16</sup>. Observance of the 'geis' is essential for the love to have any chance of survival or fulfilment. In none of the *lais* is it made clear whether the authority for the imposition and enforcement of the 'geis' is directly that of the fairy being him/herself, or that of some other supernatural force against which the fairy being is just as impotent as the mortal is. In these cases the withdrawal of love by the fairy lover appears to an extent as a punishment justified by the behaviour of the mortal. There is, then, a relationship between this situation and that already considered in *Doon*. The fundamental difference is that in the situations to be looked at here, the mortal is always warned of the loss of love that will befall him/her if he/she behaves in a certain way.

This is the case in *Graelent*. From the time of his first encounter with the fairy, she warns him that he will lose her love if ever he reveals to anyone the existence of their relationship. She first says:

'mais une cose vous deffent,  
que ne dites parole aperte  
dont nostre amors soit descoverte.'

*Graelent* 302-04.

She repeats her warning, to stress its importance: -

'Mais or soliés de grant mesure,  
gardés que pas ne vous vantés  
de cose par quoi me perdés.'

*Graelent* 318-20.

*Graelent* is, thus, well aware of the care he must take if he wishes to retain the fairy's love. He cannot, therefore, be considered completely blameless when indeed he loses her love. This comes about when he refuses to participate in the court ritual of declaring that the Queen is the most beautiful woman. Not only does he not add his voice to this, but he laughs to himself, which draws

attention to him. The reason for this is to an extent justified, as he knows that his mistress is far more beautiful than the Queen. He is, nonetheless, guilty of hubris in his public boasting to the King that he knows a woman more beautiful than the Queen (Graelent 411-76). This is the transgression of the 'geis' which loses him the love of his fairy mistress. It is certainly unintentional, as is evidenced by Graelent's surprise and sorrow on discovering that she will no longer come to him. His sorrow at the realisation of his loss overwhelms him, reducing him to desperation as he perceives that without love there can be no happiness in life for him: -

Or est Graelens entrepris,  
mix vauroit estre mors que vis.

Graelent 506-07.

He receives no response to his appeals to the fairy, forcing him to realise his own powerlessness to control his situation, his utter dependence on the fairy's mercy towards him if he is ever to enjoy fulfilment in love again. This sense of his own impotency tilts him from desperation to despair; and he has so little interest in life that after a year of such lovelessness he is close to death:

a s'amie crie merci,  
por Diu, qu'il puist parler a li.  
Ne li vaut rien, n'i parlera,  
devant un an ne le verra,  
ne ja n'avra de li confort,  
ains ert jugiés pres de le mort.

Graelent 509-14.

We see that the symptoms of his suffering in this loss of love are similar to those that have already been established as characteristic of the anguish of a yearning love that has never been fulfilled.

Although Graelent is far from blameless in his loss of the fairy's love, the intensity of his suffering ensures that he does not forfeit the reader's sympathy. More important within the narrative

itself, his suffering bears testimony to the depth of his love: it is this experience of loss that forces him to confront the nature of his own feelings and to appreciate fully the preciousness of the love he has enjoyed. His response to this loss is the basis for his new commitment to love, which is necessary if he is ever to regain the love he has lost.

Very similar to this experience of the loss of his mistress's love is that of Lanval; here, as elsewhere, the dissimilarities in the handling of comparable episodes are often of as great interest as the parallels. Like Graelent, Lanval is, from the time of his first encounter with the fairy, aware of the terms by which he must abide if he wishes to retain her love. The fairy makes clear to him the consequences of his revealing to anyone the existence of their relationship: -

'Amis, fet ele, or vus chastî,  
Si vus comant e si vus pri:  
Ne vus descovrez a nul humme!  
De ceo vus dirai ja la summe:  
A tuz jurs m'avrière perdue,  
Si ceste amur esteit seüe;  
Jamés nem purrière veeir  
Ne de mun cors seisine aveir.'

Lanval 143-50.

This is stated so unambiguously that subsequently there can be no excuse for Lanval that he acted out of ignorance, this is stressed also by his explicitly undertaking to observe these terms: -

Il li respunt que bien tendra  
Ceo qu'ele li comaundera.

Lanval 151-52.

Nevertheless, far more than Graelent in his unprompted boastfulness, Lanval is to an extent provided for an excuse when he in turn comes to transgress the conditions that have been laid down. His revelation of the existence of his mistress is made to the Queen. It is, therefore, far less of a public announcement than is

Graelent's own indiscretion. Furthermore Lanval is severely provoked, in a way that Graelent is not. When the Queen urges Lanval to grant her his love, he at first refuses on grounds of social impropriety. It is only when she suggests that he is homosexual - clearly to be read as a deeply offensive accusation - that he reveals that he has a mistress. This is an unintentional blurring out in anger, to defend his reputation by the assertion of his heterosexuality. Marie makes clear that such are the circumstances, thereby attenuating to a degree his culpability for the loss of his mistress's love, which he suffers as a consequence (Lanval 262-302). Marie draws attention to the unthinking impetuosity of his response to the Queen, also to his subsequent remorse: -

Quant il l'oi mut fu dolenz;  
Del respundre ne fu pas lenz.  
Teu chose dist par maltalent  
Dunt il se repentí sovent.

Lanval 287-90.

Repeatedly Marie draws attention to Lanval's remorse; he recognises his fault and repents of it, suffering deeply from the consequence of it: -

Il s'esteit bien aparceüz  
Qu'il aveit perdue s'amie:  
Descouvert ot la druërie!

Lanval 334-36.

Sun quor e sa buche maudit;

Lanval 345.

De l'amur dunt il se vanta;  
Dolenz en est, perdue l'a!

Lanval 377-78.

There is no comparable emphasis on the degree of Graelent's awareness of his guilt or of his repentance. Clearly Marie, far more than the anonymous author, is concerned with actively retaining her reader's sympathy for her hero, although without minimising his culpability. She thereby ensures that there can be no doubt as to



Lanval's intrinsic worthiness of enjoying fulfilment in his love for the fairy.

The description of Lanval's experience of the loss of his mistress's love focuses on many of the same aspects referred to in Graelent. There is Lanval's horror at the realisation of his loss - so great that he faints (Lanval 342). When his pleadings for her to come evoke no response he, like so many other unhappy lovers, is overcome by a sense of his own powerlessness to influence his chances of ever recovering the love he has lost (Lanval 332-51). Marie fully describes all aspects of his suffering: -

Pensis esteit e anguissus.  
S'amie apele mut sovent,  
Mes ceo ne li valut neent.  
Il se pleigneit e suspirot,  
D'ures en autres se pasmot;  
Puis li crie cent feiz merci,  
Qu'ele parolt a sun ami.  
Sun quor e sa buche maudit;  
C'est merveille k'il ne s'ocit!  
Il ne seit tant crier ne braire  
Ne debatre ne sei detraire  
Qu'ele en veulle merci aveir,  
Sul tant que la puisse veeir.  
Oi las, cument se cuntendra?

Lanval 338-51.

Such is the extent of his grief that he loses all interest in life and it is feared that he will go mad (Lanval 407-14): -

Mut dotouent k'il s'afolast!

Lanval 414.

The duration of this period of his anguished lovelessness is not specified, lasting from the moment of his revelation to the Queen at least until his departure to Avalon, when it can perhaps be assumed that the fairy is finally merciful towards him. Throughout this episode, every reference to Lanval is accompanied by a reference to his great sorrow. This repetition effectively conveys the sense of the relentlessness and the hopelessness of his suffering from a love

that may never again be reciprocated (Lanval 332; 338; 341-51; 357; 360-61; 378; 398; 409; 414). As in Graelent, neither the suffering nor the hopelessness in any way diminish the intensity of Lanval's love for the fairy, the experience functions to an extent as a necessary trial through which he comes to appreciate the value of love and the relationship that he has enjoyed with the fairy.

Desiré is the third of this series of lais in which the mortal loses the love of his fairy mistress as a result of his non-observance of a 'geis'. Here the actual terms of the 'geis' are not as explicitly stated as in the other two lais. The fairy does not specifically tell Desiré to keep the relationship a secret, but more generally urges him to love her well if he wants to retain her love<sup>17</sup>: -

'e une chose vus dirai:  
or vus gardez de meserrer,  
si vus penez de ben amer;  
si vus mesfetes de neent  
l'anel perdrez hastivement  
e si ço vus seit avenu  
Ke vus aiez l'anel perdu,  
a tuz ~~jor~~ ~~mes m'avez~~ ~~perdue~~,  
sanz recovrer e sanz veüe.'

Desiré 230-38.

This difference is of fundamental significance within the context of the lai, as it serves to focus specifically upon the question of good and bad love. Thus when Desiré loses his mistress's love, his fault appears very clearly not simply as a failure to observe a particular prohibition, but as a failure to appreciate the value of love, an aspect that has appeared only implicitly in the other lais. The withdrawal by the fairy of her love appears as a direct and justified punishment prompted by the evidence of Desiré's failure to love her according to her standards. As in the case of all the other characters whose loss of fulfilment in love has been considered, Desiré's guilt lies essentially in the lack of whole-hearted commitment to the love relationship he has had the

chance of enjoying. As in Lanval and Graelent, this expresses itself through his revelation of the relationship. Here there are no mitigating circumstances of extreme provocation or even of demands put upon him by society. The decision to talk of his mistress is entirely voluntary. His culpability lies less, however, in the fact of indiscretion than in the nature of it, as a confession to the hermit: -

D'une chose se purpensa,  
k'a cel seint home parlara,  
si se fera a lui confés;

Desiré 277-79.

That he should feel it appropriate to make such a confession reveals that he feels his relationship with the fairy to be wrong and unworthy of fulfilment. This reveals a fundamentally negative attitude towards the love that has existed between them; and it is for his perception of this love as a serious sin that he is punished by the fairy's withdrawal of her love. She subsequently makes explicitly clear the connection between his confession and the loss of her love (Desiré 365-98): -

'Si jo t'ai lungement hai,  
certes, tu l'ad bien deservi;  
tu te fesis de mei confés,'

Desiré 369-71.

By the terms of the lai, and the notions of love expressed through it, the extent of Desiré's fault is undeniable. It is, nonetheless, an unintentional fault, due to his lack of sensitivity, his lack of emotional maturity. It is not to be construed as a deliberate repudiation of love, as is evidenced by the surprise as well as the sorrow with which he discovers the disappearance of the lady's ring and therefore the loss of her love (Desiré 293-328).

Ben s'aperceit qu'il ot perdu,  
unkes mes si dolent ne fu.

Desiré 299-300.

His initial sense of loss is characterised by incomprehension: -

'Bele amie, fet Desirez,  
ou estez vus? Quant me verrez?  
Estez vus corucee a mei?'

Desiré 309-11.

Such bewilderment indicates the unintentionality of Desiré's actions: he simply had no concept of what the consequences of his confession would be.

The reader follows him through the intensification of his desperation and the gradual realisation that he has lost his mistress's love. He asserts his love for her, his dependence on this love being reciprocated if he is to find any happiness or reason to live: -

'Morir m'estut si ne vus vei,  
Vostre anelet m'avez tollu,  
ben sai que par vus l'ai perdu;  
ja mes n'avrai joie ne heit,  
alas! chetif! kë ai mesfet?  
Ja vus eim jo sur tote ren;  
certes, ne fetes mie ben.'

Desiré 312-18.

Thus we see that he accuses her of injustice in withdrawing her love from him. In his first making the connection between his visit to the hermit and the loss of her love, he defends his actions, still failing to perceive the gravity of his own fault as a failing against love: -

'Li hermites me confessa,  
unques de vus mal n'i parla,  
de mes pecchez requis pardon;  
si jo ai fet ultre raisun,  
bele, ne vus en corucez.'

Desiré 319-23.

It is the degree of his insensitivity to the reality of his own culpability that is the only justification for his betrayal of their love. His lack of insight can be interpreted to a degree as innocence; although at the same time it is the essence of culpability. The emphasis on Desiré's confusion directs the

reader's sympathy towards him still, so too does the description of his anguish in consequence of the loss of the fairy's love. When finally Desiré realises the reasons for the loss of his mistress's love, superficially at least, he then curses the hermit and himself for having made the confession: -

mut est dolent en sun corage,  
durement maldit l'ermitage  
e l'ermite qu'il i trova  
e la buche dunt il parla,

Desiré 331-34.

This is finally a recognition of his own fault and a repentance. He now realises that it is because of his acting on his religious scruples that his mistress has withdrawn her love. There remains, however, the same polarisation in his mind between love and conventional Christian morality. In confronting the fact that fulfilment in love is the most important thing for him he turns against religion. Thus his new found awareness of his own fault brings him no closer to an appreciation of the true nature of love as not in total opposition to Christian morality. Because of his persistent inability to appreciate the fairy's love on the terms by which it has been given - the terms that are within the lai as a whole upheld as being those of good love - Desiré remains, in a sense, still unworthy of her love. Certainly if he is ultimately to enjoy a fulfilling relationship with the fairy again it can only be through these standards of love being revealed to him, and for this he is dependent upon the mercy of the fairy.

Desiré's lack of insight into the nature of the love of the fairy does not reduce his appreciation of the preciousness of that love or the extent of his suffering as a result of the loss of it. As with Lanval and Graellent, the loss precipitates him into a state of complete physical debilitation, such that it is feared he will die: -

Mut est dolenz de grant manere,  
del dul qu'il ad s'en pesanti,  
en poi de tens en maladi;  
sa grant joie met en tristur,  
e sis chanz est turnez a plur.  
Un an enter e plus languï,  
trestuz le tenent a peri.  
Tuz diseient qu'il se moreit,  
e il meïmes le diseit.

Desiré 340-48.

As for the heroes of the other lais, the despair of ever enjoying the love of his fairy mistress again affects Desiré not only at an emotional level, but overwhelms the whole of his existence, making him too ill to do anything.

In each of these three lais - Lanval, Graelent, Desiré - the withdrawal by the fairy mistress of her love appears to some extent as a just punishment for the active, albeit unintentional transgression of a 'geis' by the mortal lover. In each case the mortal is guilty of a lack of caution.

Related to these is the case of the lady in Yonec in her relationship with Muldumarec. Although there is a reversal of roles, this is again a love between a mortal and a supernatural being. In the way of the fairy mistresses, Muldumarec has warned from the beginning of the need for discretion if the lady is to find fulfilment in her relationship with him (Yonec 199-210). It is, indeed, because of her lack of caution, specifically because of her lack of mesure, that their relationship is forced to an end. As in the other lais, she loses her lover through a combination of culpability and innocent carelessness. It is because of the extent of her dependence upon the relationship that she fails to pay sufficient heed to Muldumarec's warning, and so, ironically, loses the relationship completely. The great happiness she derives from

the relationship is expressed physically through the restoration of her beauty, and it is this that arouses the suspicions of her husband (Yonec 225-35). From this the relationship itself is discovered by the husband who responds by setting up the spikes at her window on which Muldumarec will be fatally wounded (Yonec 257-332). Although she does not explicitly reveal the relationship in the way of Lanval, Graellent and Desire, she is, nonetheless, responsible for her husband's discovery of its existence and thereby for Muldumarec's death<sup>18</sup>. Muldumarec himself makes clear the extent of her culpability: -

Il li ad dit: 'Ma duce amie,  
Pur vostre amur perc jeo la vie.  
Bien le vus dis qu'en avendreit:  
Vostre semblanz nus ocireit.'

Yonec 319-22.

She is, like the heroes of the other lais, horrified to discover her fault and the implications of it in terms of the loss of love that she is condemned to suffer, falling into a swoon (Yonec 323). Muldumarec is more instantly forgiving towards her for her demesure than are the fairy mistresses; he does not withdraw his love from her, but his love is not enough to save their relationship, he is as powerless as she is because he is dying (Yonec 325-32). The personal fulfilment she has enjoyed in her love for him is now lost forever, a loss she suffers very bitterly (Yonec 395-99). If she can no longer have his love, she wishes to die (Yonec 411). She is, however, condemned to live on after the death of her lover in order to bring up their son. Her immediate grief over his death is evident: -

Ele set bien que morz esteit;  
De la dolor que ele en ad  
Quatre fiées se pasmad.

Yonec 448-50.

She does not, however, suffer the total physical collapse that

afflicts the other lovelorn young knights, as after his death she is able to return to her life as a wife and to fulfil her responsibilities as a mother (Yonec 451-64).

In this she is similar to the Queen in Tydorel, a lai which, as has been noted, is in other ways also comparable to Yonec. Here too the supernatural lover imposes the condition of secrecy as necessary for the fulfilment of their relationship. From the beginning of their love, he says to her: -

'Longuement nos entrameron,  
desi qu'aperceü seron.'

Tydorel 111-12.

The force of this statement makes it appear more as a prophecy than as simply a warning. The loss of her lover's love comes, indeed, when their relationship is discovered. In no sense, however, can the lady be held responsible for this discovery, and thus the withdrawal of the mysterious knight's love cannot in any way be seen as a punishment of her, but rather as the fulfilment of his prediction. It is entirely a case of coincidence and misfortune that she should be seen with her lover by the wounded knight who comes looking for her (Tydorel 197-218). There is no suggestion that the Queen is even aware that her relationship with the knight has been discovered. The wounded knight has, apparently, no chance to reveal what he has seen to anybody else as he dies the next day; and there are, therefore, no repercussions from the discovery other than the disappearance from the Queen's life of her lover. The fact of the wounded knight coming to look for the Queen because of her reputation of helping those in need emphasises the aspect of unhappy fortuity of the incident. There is nothing in the lady's behaviour that has made it inevitable, nothing that has made her deserve the loss of her lover; so easily it could have not happened and she



could have continued in the relationship with her lover. There is a particular abruptness with which the relationship is brought to an end, the reader simply told that as soon as he has been seen the lover disappears. The outcome of this incident appears, then, not as justice asserting itself to punish the failing of a mortal, but as the manifestation of some implacable authority imposing itself on the lives of innocents. There is, in this lai, no specific allusion to the power of destiny; the authority is, therefore, clearly that of the omnipotent author himself exercising his right to expel characters from his story at will. As previously indicated, it would seem to be the case that the relationship is brought to an end because the author has no more need of it within the narrative. This emerges from the lack of analysis of the situation, there is no justification for the definitive disappearance of the lover, no description of the Queen's response to the loss of this relationship. It is simply evident that she continues her life actively as wife of the King of Brittany and mother of Tydorel.

More than in any other lai we see in Tydorel the force of the 'geis' as impartial and unforgiving, with no chance of redemption. The lovers are wholly blameless for the rupture in their relationship.

By contrast, in a number of other lais, in which there is no supernatural content, the lovers are wholly, or primarily to blame for the ending of their relationship.

In Equitan, it is unequivocally the lack of mesure in the two lovers that leads to their ultimate downfall<sup>19</sup>. Here, as in other lais, there is the irony that it is because of their dependence upon fulfilment in love that they forfeit all chance of such fulfilment.

The first step that they take towards their own deaths is in plotting the murder of the seneschal which will allow the seneschal's wife to marry Equitan. As Marie comments in her moral at the end of the lai: -

Tels purcace le mal d'autrui  
Dunt tuz li mals revert sur lui.  
Equitan 309-10.

Directly their deaths ensue from their inability to restrain their lust for each other. At the very time when they are closest to achieving their aim of marriage they jettison all by their total lack of caution, being discovered by the seneschal while they are making love. It is their lust on this particular occasion and the concupiscent nature of their love in general that leads to their justifiably sordid end, a love that was never worthy of fulfilment.

In Deus Amanz also the death of the lovers follows on from an act of démésure. Although the obstacles to their marriage are initially erected by the girl's father, it is ultimately the boy's hubris that causes them to lose not only all chance of marriage but also the degree of fulfilment they have enjoyed in their relationship up to this point. Certainly, if it were not for the father's reluctance to allow his daughter to marry the boy would never have to attempt the superhuman feat of carrying her up the hill. It is the effort of this that kills him. He has, however, been provided with the strength-giving potion that would enable him to succeed in his effort and thereby win the girl in marriage. It is his choice not to drink the potion; and thus, like Equitan and the seneschal's wife, so close to achieving the fulfilment in love to which he has been aspiring, he forfeits all. This is unintentional, but the fault remains his; and in this case, unlike in Equitan, it is not a fault shared, but wholly the boy's responsibility. This is made

clear by Marie's comment about him: -

Kar n'ot en lui point de mesure.

Deus Amanz 189.

The girl, in contrast, remains as a model of caution and of good sense. She has sought to facilitate the boy's task by fasting before the climb and by wearing the thinnest clothes possible (Deus Amanz 174-83); and throughout the climb she urges the boy to drink the potion (Deus Amanz 195-97; 209-10): -

Sovent li prie la meschine:

'Amis, bevez vostre mescine!'

Deus Amanz 209-10.

In the loss of her lover she appears, then, as the innocent victim of the boy's recklessness in disregarding her advice: -

Ja ne la volt oïr ne creire;

Deus Amanz 211.

If Marie directs the reader's sympathy more to the girl, it is not intended that our sympathy should be totally lost for the boy. His dém mesure is explained as the rashness of excessive enthusiasm<sup>20</sup>: -

Od li s'en veit grant aleüre:

Le munt munta de si qu'en mi.

Pur la joie qu'il ot de li,

De sun beivre ne li membra.

Deus Amanz 190-93.

In this way he appears as a tragic hero - destined for happiness but for a single flaw - in a way that Equitan never does.

The boy dies before having a chance to realise what he has lost. It is the young girl, who survives him for a short period, who suffers fully the despair of having lost not only the chance of ever marrying but also the chance of any relationship with the boy. It is the agony of this despair that causes her to die as there can be no happiness in a loveless existence (Deus Amanz 216-38): -

Puis que sun ami ot perdu,

Unkes si dolent ne fu.

Deus Amanz 231-32.

Li dols de lui al quor la tuche:  
Ilec murut la dameisele,

Deus Amanz 236-37.

In the extent to which the girl in Deus Amanz appears as a victim of her lover's lack of caution, she is similar to Guilliadun. In Eliduc, also the reader is encouraged to feel sympathy for both lovers, but whereas Guilliadun is entirely innocent in her plight, there is an extent to which Eliduc, however much a victim of circumstances, is responsible both for his own plight and for that of Guilliadun. Eliduc's fault is in his attempt to achieve fulfilment in a relationship he knows to be wrong and in his deception of Guilliadun. Guilliadun chooses to go with Eliduc to Brittany when he comes for her because of an expectation of a degree of fulfilment in love with him that is impossible because of his marriage to Guildeluec. Her grief over the discovery that there can be no such happiness in love is so intense that she seems unlikely to survive it, falling into a death-like swoon. It is, however, not only Guilliadun who suffers from this situation; Marie also focuses on the anguish of Eliduc over the apparent death of the woman he loves. Repeatedly there are references to this misery (Eliduc 859; 873-74; 936; 938-50; 953-78; 102), as when Guilliadun first collapses: -

Mut fet grant doel,

Eliduc 859.

At this point he feels also such wrath against the sailor who has been directly responsible for her fainting, that he kills him (Eliduc 859-70). After that there is only relentless grief and despair as he loses all interest in life: -

Eliduc feseit mut grant doel:  
Iloc fust morz od li sun voil.

Eliduc 873-74.

Dunc quida il de doel murir.

Eliduc 936.

He does not, however, die, but because existence appears to have no more to offer him, now that he has lost love, he decides to withdraw from active participation in the world: -

'Bele, fet il, ja Deu ne place  
Que james puisse armes porter  
N'el siecle vivre ne durer!'

Eliduc 938-40.

It is in order to spend his days in mourning over her that he decides at this stage to become a monk: -

'Mut ai pur vus mun quor dolent.  
Le jur que jeo vus enfuirai,  
Ordre de moigne recevrai;  
Sur vostre tumbre chescun jur  
Feraï refreindre ma dolur.'

Eliduc 946-50.

Already his life is entirely overwhelmed by his grief, he spends his days in religious devotion and in going to where she lies in the hermitage (Eliduc 953-78). Only once is there a specific reference to his remorse, when he exclaims: -

'Bel@ amie, mar me veïstes!  
Duce, chiere, mar me siwïstes!'

Eliduc 941-42.

Other than this, his grief is expressed in general terms, although with such emphasis that there can be no doubt as to its intensity.

Although the focus of the suffering for both Eliduc and Guilliadun is the same relationship, the experience of its loss is very different for the two lovers. Eliduc feels the anguish of the loss of his loved one through 'death', a sorrow mingled with guilt. Guilliadun's loss is that of a completely innocent victim, betrayed by her lover, realising that the love he has offered her is far less than she had thought it to be.

There are similarities between this situation and that between Ignoure and his unhappy mistresses, in a lai which in every other

way appears very different from Eliduc. Ignaure's fault, like that of Eliduc, can be traced to his excess of love, which leads him to deception. As with Eliduc, there can be no doubt as to the sincerity of the love he feels; there is, however, a discrepancy between the true nature of this love and how it is believed to be by his mistresses. Each of his mistresses has believed herself to be his only mistress, each feels herself equally betrayed in her love when they discover the truth. As with Guilliadun, there is both sorrow and justified indignation at the discovery of the fraudulence of the relationships they have hitherto enjoyed with him. In the case of the twelve ladies in Ignaure, it is the anger that asserts itself over the sorrow; initially they plan to kill him for his dishonesty (Ignaure 204-323): -

De courouc et d'ire enflammées,  
Cui li chevaliers ot amées

Ignaure 271-72.

Their anger has turned their love for him to hatred, a hatred justified by reason, and they confront him with his guilt: -

'Drois est que vostre outrage paire;  
Anchois k'issiés de cest repaire,  
Arés guerredon d'ome faus,  
Con trahitres et desloiaus.'

Ignaure 281-84.

They wish to make Ignaure suffer the lack of true love, such as they now feel themselves to have suffered. There is irony in this, as during the time of their relationships with him they derived as much happiness from his love as he has done from theirs, and in withdrawing their love from him they are causing themselves as much unhappiness as they cause him. To an extent the ladies themselves come to realise this, as the initial fury and hatred give way to sorrow and surviving love (Ignaure 334-65). They are convinced of the sincerity of Ignaure's love for each of them: -

Quant eles l'oent, chascune pleure.  
Molt les a faites amolliier

Li biaux parlers dou chevalier.

Ignauire 334-36.

As Ignauire's love for each of them continues unwaveringly, the choice to sever their relationships is entirely theirs, compelled into doing so by their adherence to conventional notions of fidelity in love. What is intended to be punishment against Ignauire, through the deprivation of their love, is in effect a self-sacrifice of fulfilment in love, as ultimately Ignauire is allowed to retain a relationship with one of his mistresses while the other eleven mistresses are left with no love. It is, they, more than him, who suffer to the full extent from the loss of fulfilment in love, a suffering sharpened by their own continued love for him: -

Les autres molt dolantes erent.  
Namporquant toutes afierent  
Qu'eles ja mais ne l'ameront,  
Tout em pais cuite li lairont.

Ignauire 359-62.

The pattern of cause and effect leading to the rupture of relations between Ignauire and eleven of his mistresses is, thus, somewhat complex: the blame for the collapse of these relationships must lie with Ignauire in his démasure, although the responsibility for the actual severance lies with the ladies.

The loss of Ignauire's surviving love relationship can also be blamed, in part, on Ignauire's lack of mesure. It is because he exercises no restraint in his love for his one mistress that he is captured by her husband and put to death. Ignauire's own culpability is stressed: -

Or sachiés bien k'il li couvint  
Aler maintes fois a s'amie.  
S'a toutes fust, n'i alast mie,  
Mais or n'a c'une seule voie.  
Souvent i va, ki ke le voie.  
Par le trop aler fu dechus  
Et engigniés et percheüs:

Ignauire 366-72.

Ignatures i aloit trop souvent,  
A s'amie, pour son deduit:  
La soris ki n'a c'un pertruis  
Est molt tost prise et enganee.

Ignature 478-81.

It is possible that if the ladies had not imposed upon him the sacrifice of eleven of them, he would not so easily have been captured.

As with the rupture of his relationships with them, the full weight of the unhappy ending of the final relationship is suffered not by Ignature, whose life is brought swiftly to an end after he is captured, but by the ladies who survive him, loving him still and lamenting over their loss of him. It is their misery that is highlighted in the text (Ignature 508-620), a grief that causes them to give up eating and to spend their time in mourning him: -

[Ne] pour amis ne pour parentes  
Ne voloient mangier les gentes:  
Lor dru ne vont pas oubliant.  
Molt aloient afoibloiant;  
Adiès detorgoient lor mains  
Et sospirent, et jetent plains.

Ignature 611-16.

If we consider the instances of ruptured love relationships in the *lais* in general, we see how rarely it is that both lovers withdraw equally from a relationship. Even in those relationships for which the collapse is permanent and irreconcilable - as in Bisclavret and Melion - the withdrawal of love is effected first by one of the partners, and then by the other in response to the loss. Such a pattern in the estrangement between lovers is common in the *lais*, although with variations. We see that very often the actual withdrawal of love by one of the lovers is in response to a failure of commitment to the relationship by the other. Frequently this failure is expressed explicitly as a failure to observe the terms of a 'geis' that has been imposed upon the mortal lover by the lover



from the Other World. The withdrawal of the fairy being's love appears then as a punishment. We find in other lais in which there is no supernatural dimension that the ending of a relationship by one of the lovers is similarly in response to a failure of commitment by the other, although this is not necessarily intended as a punishment, as in the case of the relationship between Guildeluëc and Eliduc.

The failure of the lover which is the initial cause of collapse of the relationship, whether permanent or temporary, is often one of démésure or lack of caution. This applies in those cases where there is the transgression of a 'geis', very often it is unintentional, with the guilty lover unwary as to the consequences of his/her actions. In the different lais, characters who have been guilty of such a lack of mesure will be presented more or less sympathetically by the author: there will be justifications for the action, mitigating circumstances and emphasis on the degree of anguish suffered as a result of the consequent loss of fulfilment in love. In other lais an act of démésure, by one or both lovers, will lead directly to the collapse of the relationship and indeed to the death of the lovers (Equitan and Deus Amanz). Again the fault of the lover is presented with greater or lesser justification. In any case, the fault of démésure remains a serious one, not only directly in itself, but also in what it reveals of a deeper failing in the lover to uphold or to appreciate the preciousness of good love and the standards by which love is worthy of fulfilment. Thus, any such failing indicates a certain unworthiness of the individual to continue to enjoy the degree of fulfilment that has hitherto been his/hers. In those instances in which the breach between the lovers is not permanent it is often precisely because as a result of the

suffering of the loss of love the guilty lover has come to appreciate its preciousness. In such circumstances the experience of loss of love acquires a particular significance as a necessary stage towards the complete fulfilment of the love relationship.

Aside from these characters who appear to a greater or lesser degree responsible for their own suffering, is the very small number of characters who appear entirely as victims in their loss of the love relationship they have enjoyed, Guildeluëc and Guilliadun in Eliduc, the young girl in Deus Amanz, the Queen in Tydorel. In each of these cases the circumstances are very different, and interestingly the presentation of each of these characters in their experience of loss is probably the least conventionalised, each responding in a different way from each other and from the other characters.

## 2. Social Pressures Leading to the Loss of Fulfilment in Love

Although often in the *lais* the collapse of a love relationship is due to circumstances within the relationship itself, related to the behaviour or attitude of one or both of the lovers, factors external to the relationship itself can also be destructive of it. The assertion of social pressures, in the form of feudal, parental or marital authority, do on a number of occasions cause the separation of the lovers.

Thus it is that twice in Eliduc, Eliduc is forced to leave behind him the woman he loves to obey the orders of his lord, the King of Brittany. First it is Guildeluëc he must leave when he is cast into exile by the King. For Eliduc himself the consequences of this are presented primarily in social terms; it is on Guildeluëc that Marie

focuses to indicate the personal significance of his departure. It is she who suffers the sense of emotional loss: -

Forment demeine grant dolor  
Al departir de sun seignur;  
Eliduc 81-82.

This is in contrast with the later occasion, when Eliduc, in deference to his vassalic obligations, is forced to separate from Guilliadun. At this point it is the suffering of both the lovers that is highlighted, indicating how different a relationship this is from his marriage. Here it is above all in terms of the emotional rupture in his life that Eliduc responds to the demands of his lord: -

Elidus oï la novele;  
Mut li pesa pur la pucele,  
Kar anguissusement l'amot  
Eliduc 571-73.

He has no thought of not fulfilling his feudal duty, but this in no way reduces the pain of his separation from the woman he loves; he exclaims: -

'Deus, tant est dur le partement!'  
Eliduc 604.

It is in particular the reciprocity of the love between Eliduc and Guilliadun that appears through the lovers' suffering; such is their dependence upon each other that Eliduc imagines they will be unable to survive the separation: -

'Quant si de li m'estuet partir,  
Un de nus deus estuet murir,  
U ambedeus, estre ceo peot,  
E nepurquant aler m'esteot.'  
Eliduc 591-94.

Guilliadun, indeed, suffers equally; when she first hears that Eliduc must go she faints: -

Se pauma ele de dolor  
E perdi tute sa culur.  
Eliduc 661-62.

She declares that life without the man she loves will contain no

happiness for her: -

'Jamés joie ne bien n'avrai.'

Eliduc 682.

The terms of their grief are conventional, familiar from the descriptions of other unhappy lovers. What distinguishes this particular situation from the majority is that in the prospect of their physical separation their love itself is re-affirmed through the sharing of their suffering (Eliduc 654-702): -

Quant Elidus la veit paumer,  
Si se cumence a desmenter.  
La buche li baise sovent  
E si plure mut tendrement.  
Entre ses braz la prist e tint  
Tant que de paumeisuns revint.

Eliduc 663-68.

Grant deol firent al desevrer;  
Lur anels d'or s'entrechangierent  
E ducement s'entrebaisierent.

Eliduc 700-02.

Insistently the reciprocity of their love is indicated, in particular through such verbs as 'entrechangierent' and 'entrebaisierent'. However, as it is in many cases a lack of reciprocity of love that has forced lovers to part, we see clearly here that reciprocity is not enough to keep lovers together. The intensity of the love between Eliduc and Guilliadun appears as powerless to ensure the fulfilment of their relationship when the demands of society run counter to it.

Separation from the woman he loves does not have the physically debilitating effect upon Eliduc that we have seen it have on a number of lovelorn heroes - Lanval, Desiré, Graelent - but although he fulfils his social duties as a model knight once he returns to Brittany, he derives no personal satisfaction from doing so. There is, indeed, no joy for him in a life without love: -

Mes il esteit tuz jurs pensis

Pur l'amur dunt il ert suspris;  
Unques pur rien que il veïst  
Joie ne bel semblant ne fist,  
Ne jamés joie nen avra  
De si qui s'amie verra.  
Mut se cuntient sutivement.

Eliduc 711-17

It is clear from her response to the news of Eliduc's subsequent return to Exeter, that Guilliadun has suffered similarly from this separation (Eliduc 781-95).

In the Lai d'Amour also the personal happiness of the lovers has to be sacrificed for the sake of the demands that feudal society makes of them. In this case the knight is obliged to leave his mistress in response to the calls from his vassals that he return to his own country and fulfil his seigniorial obligations. His unhesitating recognition that this duty to society must take precedence over his love relationship does not lessen his suffering in his parting from his mistress (Amour 170-281): -

Congie li donne, et cil s'en vet.  
Mes molt li poise quant il let  
S'amie: lessier le convient;  
Pus dist, quant de li li sovient:  
'Diex! or aide! Que diroie?  
La riens el mont que plus amoie  
M'esloingne; riens ne m'i doit plere,  
Ne je ne sai que doie fere.  
Sanz joie sui, ele a ma joie.'

Amour 203-11

Although the bond of love itself may have the power to transcend their separation, the love relationship between the knight and the lady is nonetheless seriously affected by the fact of the physical distance between them. The knight writes to the lady expressing the sense of loss that he suffers (Amour 282-92), similar to this is her own suffering, she says: -

'Toz estes miens; je sai sanz dote  
Que pas ne porroit avenir  
Que sanz vosme peust venir  
Joie ne ris por nule paine;'

Amour 306-09

Again we find expressed the notion that deprived of fulfilment in love she will die: -

La dame con loial amie  
Comme amie a son ami prie  
Que de s'amie li soviengne  
Et face tant que il aviengne  
Qu'ele le voie, ou autrement  
Le desir de si longuement  
L'ocirra, ce mande por voir;

Amour 331-37.

Her wretchedness, more than that of any other character in the *lais*, is based on her awareness of what she is missing. Her longing for a future reunion with the man she loves derives from her memories of the happiness they have previously enjoyed (Amour 338-53).

What is most obvious is that each of the lovers suffers equally in this separation, each loving the other equally, and each is able to remain assured of the unwavering love of the other. Yet their relationship is nonetheless arrested in its development, the victim of the power that the demands of society has over the personal desires of individuals.

This opposition between love and society appears also in Fresne, in which Gurun's men request that he give up his relationship with Fresne in order to fulfil his social duty<sup>21</sup>. Here again it is evident that the demands of society do not affect the quality of the love between them, they nonetheless very specifically require that they sacrifice their personal happiness. As with Eliduc and the knight in Amour, the lovers here acquiesce without question to these social pressures. The loss is particularly that of Fresne, as Marie indicates. This she does obliquely; there are no conventional histrionics, no weepings, swoonings, wailings, Fresne gives no outward appearance of her sense of loss. Yet there can be no doubt

as to the fact that she does indeed suffer, and it is testimony to her courage and generosity of spirit that she is so restrained in her externalising of emotion. The avoidance of expressions of grief that are so common through the *lais* also adds to the poignancy of her self-sacrifice<sup>22</sup>: -

Quant ele sot ke il la prist,  
Unques peiur semblant ne fist;  
Sun seignur ~~ser~~ mut bonement  
E honure tute sa gent.  
Li chevalier de la meisun  
E li vadlet e li garçun  
Merveillus dol por li feseient  
De ceo ke perdre la deveient.

Fresne 351-58.

In Milun it is the lady who is forced to submit to her social duty of marriage to a man she does not love, a marriage that is contrary to her personal desires which can find fulfilment only through her relationship with Milun. Although the love between her and Milun survives the period of separation during her marriage, the relationship is almost strangled (Milun 149-288). In this case the authority that asserts herself against the lovers - albeit not specifically so - is that of the girl's father, who is responsible for forcing her into a marriage arranged for social reasons. As in the other cases, this is a social force against which the lovers are impotent, as the young woman fully recognises as she approaches her marriage with despair: -

'Mieuz me vendreit murir que vivre!  
Mes jeo ne sui mie delivre,  
Ainz ai asez sur mei gardeins  
Vieuz e jeofnes, mes chamberleins,  
Ki tuz jurz heent bone amur  
E se delitent en tristur.  
Or m'estuvrat issi souffrir,  
Lasse! quant jeo ne puis murir.'

Milun 141-48.

In Espine also it is parental authority that forces the lovers to give up the relationship they have enjoyed. Here, unlike in Milun, it is specifically to put an end to this love relationship that the

girl's mother intervenes: the opposition of love and society is explicit, as is the impotency of the lovers against the power of society. Although it is directly the mother's anger that brings the relationship to a halt (temporary), stress is, nonetheless, also placed on the extent to which the lovers themselves are also responsible for their loss. Like so many other lovers in the *lais*, they have failed to observe the need for caution in their relationship; exercising no restraint in their love for each other, they suffer the consequences of discovery: -

s'il eüssent tel essient  
de bien lor amors a garder  
con il orent en ~~la~~ amer,  
a painnes fussent decheü,  
mais tost furent apercheü.

Espine 64-68.

Thus again, we see the destructiveness of démasure in lovers, as so often a démasure that is due to thoughtlessness so that the outcome is suffered as a shock and with much pain by the lovers, who are prevented by their parents from having any contact. As so often, we find expressed the fear that the agony of love unfulfilled during this period of enforced separation will lead inevitably to death. The young man says: -

'Helas, fait il, que le ferai?  
Ja sans li vivre ne porai.  
Diex, quel euré e quel peciés!  
Con folement me sui gaitiés!  
Certes, ~~se~~ je ne rai m'amie,  
bien sai por li perdrai la vie.'

Espine 119-25.

He does not, however, die from his unhappiness, nor does he fall into the physical decline familiar from the experiences of other lovelorn young men. Unique among them, he is rather galvanised into action; as he can no longer enjoy the personal fulfilment that has made up his life, he will succeed in social terms (Espine 137-48). His sense of hopelessness over his loss of fulfilment in love is



thus metamorphosed into a motivating force.

More conventional is the presentation of his mistress, who suffers equally from a sense of loss. This is expressed through her longing to see her lover again and the fear that such a reunion will not be possible. She addresses her prayers to God: -

'biaux Sire, prenge t'en pitié  
que li miens amis od moi fust  
e jou od lui, s'estre peüst.'

Espine 244-46.

Whereas the young man attempts to submerge his sorrow, she is overwhelmed by her grief over their lost love: -

Tant est a s'amor ententive  
e a plorer e a duel faire,  
li jors en vait, la nuis repaire,  
Espine 258-60.

Although their responses to the situation express themselves very differently in their behaviour, in both there is a sense of their powerlessness to take the initiative towards being reunited.

There are many similarities between the experience of these lovers and that of the young couple in Piramus et Tisbé. Here too it is the enforcement of parental authority that causes them to be separated after a short period of happiness in love. In the case of Piramus and Tisbé, there is no suggestion that they have been guilty of démésure in their love for each other. The responsibility for the severance of their relationship is wholly attributed to the parents (Piramus et Tisbé 83-116)<sup>23</sup>.

Initially from the point of this rupture, the lovers are prevented from having any contact whatever with each other. From this total isolation they achieve the means of limited communication, talking to each other through the chink in the wall between the two houses.

This provides little solace to them as relentlessly from the time of their separation they are overwhelmed by their sense of loss, by their desperation over their love for each other that cannot find fulfilment. Repeatedly throughout the lai there are references to the depth of their suffering, which is such that they have no interest in any other aspect of life (Piramus et Tisbé 109-589). What is most striking is the extent to which their intensity of love and suffering are described in identical terms. This highlights the unnaturalness of their separation; even physically apart they appear not as two individuals but as an entity that has been split: -

Li dui enfant sont en destroit;  
Li uns n'ot l'autre ne ne voit:  
Moult lor semble grief la devise  
Que lor parent ont entr'aulz mise.  
Mes ce que l'en les garde plus,  
Que Tisbé n'ose issir de l'us  
Ne Piramus vers li garder,  
Fet lor amour plus aviver.

Piramus et Tisbé 109-16.

Toute lor vie est en dolour;  
Plorent, gient chascuns en soi,  
Ne se vent ~~deus deus nul~~ enroi,  
Ne ne pueent trouver remire  
Ne par mecine ne par mire.

Piramus et Tisbé 132-36.

The young lovers appear as victims both of Nature which has imposed such love upon them and of their parents who have prevented them from finding fulfilment in this love. Against both forces the lovers are completely powerless, an impotency which contributes much to their wretchedness.

If in relationships between lovers who are unmarried, it is parents who have the power to force the lovers apart, in adulterous relationships it is the cuckolded husband who is endowed with a similar destructive power. We have seen from the previous chapter that a considerable degree of fulfilment can be achieved in such

adulterous relationships, but only when they are successfully concealed from the husband. If some are able to survive without rupture it is because the husband remains ignorant. Others, however, are forcibly ended or at least interrupted by the intervention and active opposition of the husband.

This is the case in Guigemar. After a period of enjoying a secret but almost unrestricted relationship, Guigemar is forced to leave his mistress after her husband has discovered the lovers together (Guigemar 577-633). The abrupt termination of the relationship causes both of them much sorrow. While travelling away from his mistress and the country in which she lives, Guigemar fears he will never see her again and consequently wishes he were dead: -

Li chevaliers suspire e plure;  
La dame regretout sovent  
E prie Deu omnipotent  
Qu'il li dunast hastive mort  
E que jamés ne vienge a port  
S'il ne repeot avoir s'amie,  
K'il desire plus que sa vie.

Guigemar 622-28.

This is paralleled by the lady's own expressions of grief, she too wishing to die rather than live a loveless existence: -

'Mieuz voil hastivement murir  
Que lungement cest mal souffrir.'

Guigemar 669-70.

Neither dies, but neither can find any joy in their life of separation. Guigemar, returned to Brittany, is constantly unhappy and unwilling to take any active part in society (Guigemar 634-54).

The lady's existence is similarly limited and wretched: -

Nuls hum el mund ne purreit dire  
Sa grant peine, ne le martire  
Ne l'anguisse ne la dolor  
Que la dame souffre en la tur.  
Deus anz i fu e plus, ceo quit;  
Unc n'i ot joie ne deduit,  
Sovent regréte sun ami:

Guigemar 661-67.

Again we see that the intensity of the love binding the lovers is impotent to bring them fulfilment in their relationship against the opposition of social authority.

In Yonéc we have seen the extent to which the lady's lack of mesure is to blame for the death of Muldumarec. It is, nonetheless, her husband who is directly responsible for this, as it is he who, having discovered his wife's infidelity determines to kill her lover (Yonéc 279-96). That it is the husband's deliberate antagonism against the lovers, rather than the lady's lack of restraint, that is ultimately to bear the weight of the guilt, is indicated by Muldumarec. He willingly forgives his mistress's démésure but asserts the need for vengeance against her husband (Yonéc 325-332).

In Laustic, there is a similar balance in the factors leading to the severance of relations between the lovers. Although there is a degree of démésure in the couple's behaviour and in their lack of due restraint in their love for each other<sup>24</sup>, the full responsibility for the ending of their relationship lies with the husband. It is he who kills the nightingale which has provided the lovers with the excuse for their conversations. This is deliberately an act against the relationship. Although not certain of its existence, he is suspicious and in his malevolence specifically seeks to deprive his wife of any means of happiness, even if it is only an innocent pleasure in birdsong (Laustic 91-119)<sup>25</sup>. The bond of love may survive, but the death of the nightingale destroys the chances of any fulfilment in that love.

In Ignauere there is similarly a combination of such factors bringing to a decisive end the relationship between Ignauere and his last

mistress. There is Ignaure's own fault of demesure, but, here too, it is the intervention of the cuckolded husband that is actively responsible both for the demise of the relationship and for the death of Ignaure (Ignaure 384-620).

In Chievrefoil the intervention of the deceived husband into the adulterous relationship is not shown in the course of the story, but is nonetheless referred to as the explanation for the enforced separation of the lovers at the beginning of the lai. The power of authority, that Mark has been able to wield over Tristan and the Queen, is not only that of a wronged husband but also that of a lord betrayed by his vassal. He has used this authority to send Tristan into exile to ensure that there can be no further contact between the lovers: -

Li reis Marks esteit curuciez,  
Vers Tristram sun nevu iriez;  
De sa tere le cuncea  
Pur la reine qu'il ama.

Chievrefoil 11-14 .

As in other such situations it is the fact of the love continuing between the lovers despite the physical distance between them that is the cause of their suffering: -

Ne vus esmerveilliez neënt,  
Kar cil ki eime lealment  
Mut est dolenz e trespensez  
Quant il nen ad ses volentez.  
Tristram est dolenz e pensis,

Chievrefoil 21-25.

Such is his wretchedness at being parted from Iseult in this way, that he is willing to risk his life in order to snatch a brief encounter with her. It remains, however, impossible, for them to enjoy again the relationship they have lost as they have no power against Mark's authority. Thus it is that at the end of the lai, the lovers have to separate again and to continue to endure the

unhappiness of unfulfilled love.

Mes quant ceo vint al desevrer,  
Dunc comencierent a plurer.  
Tristram en Wales s'en rala  
Tant que sis uncles le manda.

Chievrefoil 103-06.

This final reference to the powerlessness of lovers against an authority that is recognised and upheld by society, even when abused, points to the crucial aspect that is characteristic of all such situations in which lovers are forced apart against their will.

We have seen that it is not only in such instances that the sense of impotency to control his/her own chances of fulfilment in love overwhelms the lover. It is to be found with equal strength in every case of unreciprocated love, in which the authority that imposes itself against the lovelorn lover is that of the loved one, who has either never loved or has withdrawn the love that has previously been granted. This powerlessness is, then, a central feature to all experiences of unfulfilled love, whether it be a love that has never been fulfilled or a love that has been lost. It is the cause of much of the suffering of the unhappy lover. This powerlessness is not, however, always such that it allows the lover no hope of ultimately achieving the degree of fulfilment in love that is yearned for; and although the lover is to a large extent dependent upon the reciprocity in feelings of the object of the love and also upon the favourability of external circumstances, there is a degree also of self-determination that is possible. The lover can earn his/her fulfilment in love by his/her attitude to love and by his/her behaviour. It is a failure of commitment to love or a failure of due restraint within a relationship that can cost the lover his/her chances of happiness, a failure that is often unintentional, but, nonetheless, serious and destructive in its

consequences. The failing of démésure and of lack of commitment in love is to be found repeatedly in the *lais* as a cause, direct or indirect of the lack/loss of fulfilment in love. In the majority of such cases, however, the causes are multiple, a combination of the guilt of the lovers and of the opposition of society; only rarely are there situations in which the pressures of society play no part in causing the unhappiness of the lovers. It is even more rare to find lovers who are entirely innocent victims in their plight of lovelessness.

In the descriptions of the suffering endured by such unhappy lovers there is a great deal of conventionality. There are references to the insomnia, the physical debilitation suffered; the lovers express their longing for death as preferable to an existence that is loveless, and indeed a small number die once deprived of all hope of fulfilment in love. Grief-stricken lovers weep and faint, bewail their fate. Often there is in their desperation a mixture of hopelessness and hope as they imagine the joy that would be theirs if only they could be reunited with the one they love. Repeatedly they claim that without love there can be no happiness in life. These expressions of misery in lovelessness are to be found in very different *lais*, equally in cases of lack of love and loss of love fulfilment, whether caused primarily by discord between the couple or by external factors over which they have no control, such as destiny, society, the supernatural.

In a number of cases the combination of hope and hopelessness is replaced by despair, when it becomes evident that the love will never be fulfilled. Although the expressions of grief in these cases may continue to be conventional, there is greater variety in

the responses. In such despair there is usually a conjunction of sorrow and anger; in those cases in which the emotion of love survives it is the sorrow that is the more prominent force. However the anger of despair can take the upper hand in destroying all love that has been, metamorphosing it into hatred.

In the majority of the *lais* the period of lovelessness endured by the lover(s) is limited to allow for a happy ending of love fulfilled. This does not, however, reduce the extent of the suffering or alter its nature, as every lover in such a situation fears that his/her longings for happiness in love may be condemned to permanent non-fulfilment.



Chapter Five: Footnotes

- 1 (p.374) Antoinette Knapton: Mythe et psychologie chez Marie de France dans Guigemar.  
see p.41. Knapton draws attention to the initial imbalance in Guigemar's position in terms of social and personal fulfilment.

Selon les lois féodales Guigemar est prisé au plus haut degré; selon les lois naturelles, il est méprisé. p.41

- 2 (p.375) Rupert T. Pickens: 'Thematic Structure in Marie de France's Guigemar'.  
see pp.328-29. Pickens interprets vv.57-58 not as meaning that Guigemar has acted against Nature, but rather that Nature has acted against him.

Guigemar has a personal fault which has adverse social consequences. The poem shows the accomplishment of Guigemar's destiny, which leads to the resolution of his problem and, it is implied to his eventual elevation to a position of social pre-eminence. The hero passes through stages representing his growing consciousness of his identity as a man. The stages of his coming to consciousness are indicated by ever more expansive reiteration of symbolic themes principally the wound. Tension is maintained between Guigemar's personal and social lives and his destiny is not fulfilled until they have been ordered and integrated. As described, the hero's fault has to do with Nature and love, but his destiny is controlled by God. Guigemar's redemption is pre-destined, and God, Nature and Love work in a hierarchical relationship to motivate all events and characters which advance his consciousness of sexuality. Thus Guigemar's redemption is in harmony with universal order. p.330

- 3 (p.376) Pickens: 'Thematic Structure in Marie de France's Guigemar'.  
see p.331,

Robert B. Green: 'The Fusion of Magic and Realism in two Lays of Marie de France'.  
see p. 325. Green reads 'peri' not as a euphemism for homosexual, but as: -

doomed or lost because no matter how great his knightly triumphs he remained incomplete. p.325

- 4 (p.376) Emil Schiödt: L'Amour et les amoureux dans les Lais de Marie de France.  
see pp.9-10.
- 5 (p.380) Rosemarie Jones: The Theme of Love in the Romans d'Antiquité.  
see pp.17-18.
- 6 (p.383) Green: 'The Fusion of Magic and Realism in two Lays of Marie de France'.

If he is to seek fulfilment, he must make the trip which

will lend access to the complicated world of committed and gentle love which must follow love that is purely sexual. p.326

- 7 (p.383) Moshé Lazar: Amour courtois et fin' amors dans la littérature du XIIe siècle.

see p.179. Lazar relates her yearning for love to the notions of love held by the troubadours of southern France.

- 8 (p.384) Schiött: L'Amour et les amoureux dans les Lais de Marie de France.

see pp.16-19,

- 9 (p.384) Judith Rice Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the 'Lais' of Marie de France: Themes and Variations, vol I.

We learn of two ironical developments: the marriage undertaken for the sole purpose of procreation is childless; and the lady's beauty, the reason for her husband's cruel programme, is lost as a result of that programme. p.172

- 10 (p.384) Robert Benjamin Green: The Growth of Love: A Study of Reality and Symbolism in the Lays of Marie de France.

Sociologically this situation reflects the medieval world in which Marie lived, where marriages were arranged for economic and political convenience rather than for love. Therefore, the point of view of the author is immediately discernible: the story takes place on one level in the far off past where dreams can be realised but on another level it is set in Marie de France's own time and illustrates the injustice that women of intelligence and high birth must have suffered. p.27

- 11 (p.388) Joanne A. Rice: 'Conventional and Unconventional Character Description in the Lais of Marie de France'. see p.344. The analysis of Guigemar's feelings here proves Rice's assertion about Marie's characterisation to be over-simplified.

She was never pre-occupied with character development or the awakening of emotions. p.344

Marie focused on the outward behaviour of more or less stock characters whose inner lives are never revealed. p.344

- 12 (p.394) Marie Noëlle Lefay-Toury: La Tentation du suicide dans le roman français du XIIe siècle. see pp.74-75.

Voilà sans doute la vraie morale du poète, que l'auteur y a incluse presque malgré lui: celui qui réduit l'univers aux dimensions de sa personne s'enfermera dans un cercle fatal qui le conduira à sa mort. p.75

- 13 (p.396) Martine Thiry-Stassin: 'Une autre source ovidienne du Narcisse?' see pp.213-15.

- 14 (p.403) Lise Lawson: 'La Structure du récit dans les Lais de Marie de France'.

La dame refuse d'opter pour l'un ou l'autre des chevaliers. Elle manque donc de vraie courtoisie et les protestations de Marie à cet égard ne font que mettre en valeur l'égocentrisme de l'héroïne. p.235

- 15 (p.411) Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France.

see p.96. Rothschild, no doubt justifiably, stresses the wife's culpability and Bisclavret's innocence as a victim of betrayal.

Another interpretation is possible, and, in my opinion more likely: that his foolhardy promise, like his sudden embrace, represents an outpouring of tenderness. p.96

In such circumstances, the collapse of the relationship between Bisclavret and his wife appears very similar to that between Melion and his wife, with the same thrust of irony that it is as a gesture of love that Bisclavret loses the love he seeks to retain.

- 16 (p.414) John Revell Reinhard: The Survival of Geis in Medieval Romance.

- 17 (p.419) Jean Subrenat: 'L'Aveu du secret d'amour dans Le Lai de Désiré'.  
pp.371-73

- 18 (p.424) Emanuel J. Mickel Jr.: 'A Reconsideration of the Lais of Marie de France'.

see pp.54-55. Mickel draws attention to the impact of the lady's démeseure.

Yet one would be wrong to conclude that Marie's emphasis on the lady's 'démeseure' indicates her disapproval of the nature of the love. Throughout the lai the basic goodness of the lady's character and the earnest nature of the couple's love are quite clear. p.55

Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France.

see p.191.

- 19 (p.426) Ibid.

the king will be the complete victim of his evil love.  
p.34

more and more, he creates his own destiny. p.27

Robert B. Green: 'Fin'amors dans deux lais de Marie de France: 'Equitan et Chaitivel'.  
see p.267. Green reads the criticism in Equitan as applying

not only to this particular couple but more generally to their type of love, an 'amour-passion', which is of its nature destructive.

see p.270. The fault of the lovers lies in their being dominated by the power of this passion.

Glyn S. Burgess: 'Two Cases of Mesure in the Lais of Marie de France'.

see p.202.

It is a representation of the destructive power of love, when the characters are not protected and guided by some form of divine power, as they are in the so-called lais féeriques. p.202

- 20 (p.428) F.Y. St.Clair: 'Marie de France's Lai des Douz Amanz'.  
see pp. 82-83.

Lazar: Amour courtois et fin' amors dans la littérature du XIIe siècle.

see p.183.

Nous retrouvons ici un couple d'amoureux que la passion consume, mais leur mort est causée par un péché d'orgueil plutôt que par la fatalité. p.183

Jeanne Wathelet-Willem: 'Un Lai de Marie de France: Les Deux Amants'.

see pp.1152-56. Jeanne Wathelet-Willem stresses the boy's fault of démasure in his forgetting to drink the potion because of an excess of passion and sensual pleasure aroused by carrying the woman he loves up the hill.

Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France.

Judith Rothschild places similar emphasis on the boy's fault: -

his lack of moderation brings about his tragic death.  
p.139

Domenico Fasciano: 'La Mythologie du lai Les Deux Amants'.

see pp.81-82

Burgess: 'Two Cases of Mesure in the Lais de Marie de France'.  
see pp.204-08. A response to Jeanne Wathelet-Willem's criticism of the boy, pointing to the mitigating circumstances and Marie's evident sympathy for both lovers.

It would seem inconceivable that Marie would condemn a personage of orgueil and then allow him a permanent place alongside his beloved. p.205

- 21 (p.439) Paula Clifford: Marie de France: Lais.  
see p.44.

- 22 (p.440) Francois Suard: 'L'utilisation des éléments folkloriques dans le lai du "Frêne"'.  
see pp.44-45; 48. Fresne's restraint is in contrast to the public outbursts of the heroine of the Scottish ballad 'Fair Annie' which in other ways closely resembles Fresne.

- 23 (p.442) Jones: The Theme of Love in the Romans d'Antiquité.

see pp.4-5. Jones draws attention to the specific inclusion of the lovers' families in the Old French tale, and of a social setting which is not to be found in the Ovidian story.

A.M. Cadot: 'Du Récit mythique au roman: étude sur Piramus et Tisbé'.

On constate la création d'un entourage social limité, certes, mais bien réel. Dans les Métamorphoses les parents n'existent pas, ils sont simplement, presque abstraitement l'obstacle. p.454

Dans Piramus la famille est un peu tangible, elle a un statut social. p.454

24 (p.445) William S. Woods: 'Marie de France's Laüstic'. see pp.204-05. Woods is particularly critical of the wife's dém mesure, putting the blame on her for the discovery of the relationship and the relationship with the knight.

25 (p.445) Thomas Alan Shippey: 'Listening to the Nightingale'. see p.52. Shippey points to evidence that by the twelfth century the nightingale has become associated with love in a particular way.

by this period, not only is the nightingale connected with love, but with illicit and frustrated love. p.52

CHAPTER SIX: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IN THE LAIS AS DEFINED BY FORMS OF SOCIAL AND PERSONAL FULFILMENT AND NON-FULFIMENT

It is by now evident that although it is possible to identify different situations in the lais in terms of their significance as forms of personal or social fulfilment/non-fulfilment, these forms do not exist in isolation from each other. The same relationship will have both a social and a personal significance and will through the course of a lai pass through different states of fulfilment and non-fulfilment. Each of these states exists in interaction with other states; just as a personal relationship has social implications, so within a fulfilled relationship there is often the implicit threat of the loss of that relationship; within a state of lovelessness there is the potential for reconciliation. Only in certain extreme circumstances can a situation be defined as a polarisation of fulfilment or non-fulfilment. The majority of situations appear as partially fulfilled and fulfilling, with a combination of factors - social pressures, personal desires - coming into play in determining how the balance falls between fulfilment and non-fulfilment.

The final stage in the study must, therefore, be concerned with a consideration of the extent to which the interaction between the forms of social and personal fulfilment/non-fulfilment is of importance within the narrative structure of each of the lais. For this, inevitably, each lai is considered in isolation<sup>1</sup>.

GUGEMAR

In this lai the forms of social fulfilment and of personal fulfilment appear very clearly in opposition, due to the emphasis

within the story on the physical displacement of the hero. Like all the lais, the narrative structure is purely linear in chronological terms. If we look more closely, it emerges that within the core of the text there is a zig-zag pattern, to be exact a double zig-zag pattern, one relating to Guigemar's relations with society, the other to his relationship with the lady. The patterning is reinforced by the use of parallels and mirror images.

### I Initial situation

Guigemar is socially well-integrated, as an active knight, appreciated by the King, close to his family, with a circle of friends. He appears as the model of a socially fulfilled individual (27-75).

Fulfilment in love is, however, totally absent from his existence, to a most extreme degree as he is lacking any interest in love (57-68).

### II 1. Physical Isolation → Lack of Social Fulfilment

The transition from his initial situation to one that is a reversal of it, involving complete social isolation, is a gradual one.

i) Guigemar goes into the forest, still integrally a member of society, as this is to hunt and accompanied by friends (76-84).

ii) Guigemar is separated by his companions in his pursuit of the white doe. This is specifically physical separation - the density of the woods (84-102).

iii) The episode with the doe is Guigemar's first encounter with the Other World in opposition to the Real World. This is also the first discovery of the forces of love (103-22).

iv) Guigemar takes the initiative in isolating himself from society, physically by sending away his valet and by moving into the wilderness away from his own country - the forest, the heathland, the mountains, as far as the sea, followed by the crossing in the magic ship (151-208).

This is also symbolically as well as actively a movement towards fulfilment in love, as the specific goal of his journey<sup>2</sup>.

## II 2. Fulfilment in Love while Physically Isolated from Society

In his relationship with the lady in the ancient city, Guigemar experiences a lifestyle that is a reversal of his initial situation.

He now enjoys the fulfilment in love that was totally absent from his life initially (209-576).

He is physically isolated from all those aspects that had defined his degree of social fulfilment; away from his own country, his family, his feudal relationships, his courtly companions. In no way is he able to fulfil the role of an active knight, as he neither fights nor hunts.

As well as a reversal in his physical situation, there is a fundamental reversal in Guigemar's attitude; from having no interest in love, he now has no interest in his previous life in society. We



can contrast the key lines that bear testimony to this change.

Initially: -

De tant i out mespris Nature  
Ke unc de nule amur n'out cure.

Guigemar 57-58.

and once in the 'antive cité' and in love with the lady: -

Mes Amur l'ot feru al vif;  
Ja ert sis quors en grantestrif,  
Kar la dame l'ad si nafre,  
Tut ad sun pais ublié.

Guigemar 379-82.

## II 3. Separation of Lovers

i) Guigemar's return to Brittany results from the breach in his relationship with the lady because of the husband's discovery (577-654).

The journey appears as a mirror image of his first journey, in the details as well as in the essential nature of it. The crucial difference is in the change in Guigemar's state of mind. When embarking on the magic ship the first time, it is with the hope of finding fulfilment in love. He prays to God to save his life: -

A Deu prie k'en prenge cure,  
K'a sun poeir l'ameint a port  
E sil defende de la mort.

Guigemar 200-02.

In contrast to this hope is the despair that Guigemar feels when he travels on the boat the second time, knowing that he is leaving fulfilment in love behind him. In his despair he prays to God not to spare his life, but rather to let him die: -

La dame regretout sovent  
E prie Deu omnipotent  
Qu'il li dunast hastive mort  
E que jamés ne vienge a port

Guigemar 623-26.

We find the same rhyme 'mort'/'port', but reversed in order and reversed in significance.

This fundamental change in Guigemar is due to his experience between the two journeys. The love that he aspires to when he first makes the crossing is an abstract notion; the love that he regrets during the second crossing is a particular, experienced relationship.

The aspect of reversal in these two journeys is reinforced through the character of the valet. Just as he was the last person Guigemar saw before leaving his country (133-37), so he is the first person he meets on returning (634-40): the last and first contact with society.

In returning to his home in Brittany, Guigemar has not, however, turned a full circle<sup>3</sup>. The society itself is identical to that he left, his friends and family keen to reintegrate him completely into the existence he enjoyed before. The difference is all in his own attitude, from being a man happy in an active social existence, he now finds no pleasure in this same social existence, the change wrought in him by his discovery and experiences of love (630-54).

G in society and popular  
(happy)

G alone with valet

G on ship  
(prayer to God)  
asking for life

G and love

G on ship  
(prayer to God)  
asking for death

G alone with valet

G in society and popular  
(unhappy)

ii) The lady goes to Brittany, her journey closely paralleling that of Guigemar. The same magical, self-navigating boat takes her from the ancient city to Brittany. Her mood is characterised by the same despair, the same longing for death rather than lovelessness (655-742).

Despite the difference that for Guigemar this is a return to his own country and that for the lady it is a visit to a strange place, their experiences in Brittany are very similar. Both are actively welcomed into a courtly society; of Guigemar's return home we are told: -

joiusen sunt  
Tuit si ami, ki trové l'unt.  
Mut fu preisie en sun país,  
Guigemar 641-43.

This can be compared with the welcome the lady receives at Meriaduc's castle: -

Bien fu servie e honuree,  
Richement la vest e aturne;  
Guigemar 716-17.

Both are urged to participate fully in society through marriage; both, however, are loath to do so, finding no pleasure in society without fulfilment in love. Of Guigemar we are told: -

Mes tuz jurs ert maz e pensis.  
Guigemar 644.

This is closely echoed in the description of the lady at the same time and living a similar life: -

Mes tuz jurs ert pensive e murne.  
Guigemar 718.

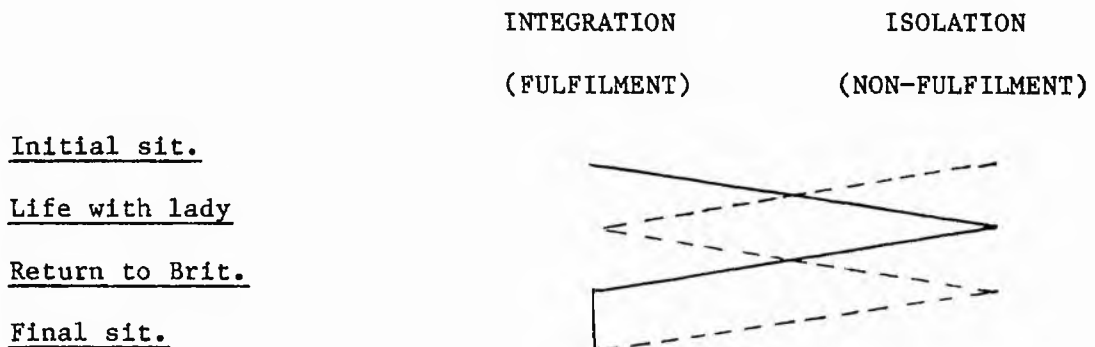
### III Final Situation

Ultimately there is a balance between social fulfilment and personal fulfilment. In his defeat of Meriaduc, Guigemar is returned to his life of an active knight, reaffirming the skills that are an

essential part of his identity in society at the beginning of the lai.

This time his chivalric prowess serves specifically to win the lady for Guigemar. Thus at the end of the lai we are left with the possibility of their personal relationship being integrated into society (743-882).

The development of Guigemar as an individual both in terms of actual experience and in terms of attitude to both love and society corresponds with the narrative development of the lai of Guigemar, as can be seen clearly from the following diagram: -



Guigemar and love: ———

Guigemar and society: - - -

It is possible from this to see the extent to which the development in Guigemar's social and personal relationships is central to the story. The articulations of the narrative are very clearly defined, and it is evident that the supernatural plays an important role motivating these articulations. On four occasions there are occurrences of supernatural intervention, all of them affecting the relationship of the lovers with each other and with society. Such intervention is essential if Guigemar is to be able to make his

transition from the initial situation of fulfilment in society without fulfilment in love, to the final situation of his enjoying a balance of both kinds of fulfilment: -

1) The meeting with the magical doe is the necessary first step of Guigemar's desiring love towards his actual fulfilment in love (103-22).

2) The first journey on the magic ship allows the transition from love as an abstract notion to love as an actual experience (151-208).

3) Guigemar's second journey on the magical ship although taking him away from the woman he loves is his only means of survival, allowing the possibility of reunion of the lovers in the future. It serves directly to return him to society (611-32).

4) The lady's journey on the magic ship takes her both towards the chance of fulfilment in love and towards fulfilment in Breton society (678-92).

Thus in no way can the manifestations of the supernatural in Guigemar be seen in terms of gratuitous decoration. Each serves a necessary role as a dynamic force, propelling Guigemar and the lady forwards through their relationship, and thereby structuring the narrative.

#### EQUITAN

The narrative structure in this lai is a simple linear one, with a final rebound, defined by the changes in the relationships between

Equitan and society and Equitan and the lady.

### I Initial situation

Equitan is socially fulfilled as an active king and knight (13-28). He lacks, however, fulfilment in love.

### II 1. Fulfilment in Love

The tale is moved forward from its initial position by Equitan's falling in love with the seneschal's wife, from which a relationship ensues, providing him with a great deal of personal fulfilment that was previously lacking in his life (29-186).

In being involved in this adulterous affair, he is, however, failing in his seigniorial duties and responsibilities, both to his seneschal in particular and to his vassals in general.

There is, therefore, an opposition between personal fulfilment and social fulfilment.

### II 2. Attempt at Reconciling Personal Fulfilment and Social Fulfilment

The relationship between Equitan and the seneschal's wife could potentially be static. It is not the relationship in itself that precipitates the characters to the final situation, although it is clearly the underlying cause of their deaths.

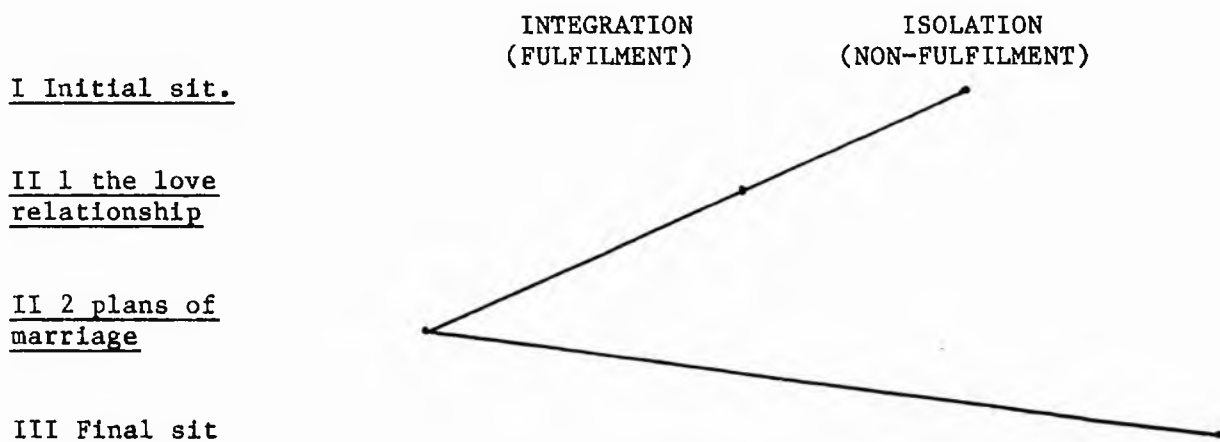
What leads to this directly is the lover's desire to integrate their personal relationship into society through marriage, which would allow them to achieve a balance of personal and social fulfilment. This desire emerges from their own awareness of the conflict between

personal desires and social pressures that exist within their present relationship. Ironically, it is precisely the means chosen to achieve such a reconciliation between personal and social fulfilment that loses Equitan any chance of ever achieving either personal or social fulfilment; this is because the means itself - the murder of the seneschal - is fundamentally contrary to the standards of the society into which they are seeking to be integrated (187-286).

### III Final Situation

The final situation of the death of the lovers represents, then, the total reversal of their aspirations, brought about precisely because of their pursuit of such aspirations (287-310).

It is the developments in this love relationship that define the actual structure of the narrative; the changes in the lovers' position vis-à-vis society are consequences of those developments rather than contributing directly to the narrative structure. This we can see from the following diagram: -



## FRESNE

In Fresne social and personal fulfilment/non-fulfilment are closely intertwined, rather than being set in complete opposition as in many of the lais. This is because the narrative is as much concerned with tracing the story of Fresne's relationship with her family as it is that of her love affair with Gurun<sup>4</sup>. The separation from her parents and the final reunion are as significant in social terms as in personal terms. In the development of the love relationship, which is entwined with the other to contribute to the narrative structure, there is also, ultimately, a fusion of the social and personal.

### I Initial Situation

For the briefest period, at the time of her birth, Fresne is integrated into what is her natural society. The fundamental aspects of her birth - her social status and family identity - established at this point define the role in society that is rightfully hers to fulfil, and from which she will be isolated (65-70).

### II Isolation

#### II 1. Extreme Isolation

The nadir for Fresne in her period of social isolation is brought about by her being taken from her mother and her home and abandoned to her fate under a tree outside the town. This is extreme physical and social isolation, although within it there is the potential for her social reintegration - the ring and the coverlet as evidence of her noble birth, the proximity to the convent (71-176).



## II 2. First Step towards Social Reintegration

Fresne's found by the porter and his daughter; this is her reintegration into human society, although very far from the noble society that is her natural environment (177-210).

## II 3. Second Step towards Social Reintegration

Fresne is brought up by the abbess, thus provided with an education that is suited to her noble birth (211-42).

## II 4. Third Step towards Social Reintegration

Fresne is taken by Gurun to his castle; although she cannot be fully integrated into noble society, this relationship allows her to live within her natural social environment, the aristocratic household.

This also adds to her life the dimension of personal fulfilment, which is also not fully realised yet (243-358).

The limitations upon both Fresne's social and personal fulfilment at this stage are due to the same reason: the fact of her not being married to Gurun, which in turn is due to the missing link in her relationship with her family identity.

## II 5. Fourth Step towards Social Reintegration

The reunion of Fresne and her parents: this is crucial in itself, in both social and personal terms, as providing Fresne with an identity. As a compensation for the lack suffered by Fresne after the initial situation, this is an essential stage within the narrative. It has been made possible by Fresne's relationship with Gurun. In its turn, this reunion between parents and child makes the fulfilment of the lovers' relationship possible also. This

indicates how closely entwined are the two relationships at the level of the narrative, both representing equally a fusion of personal and social factors (359-492).

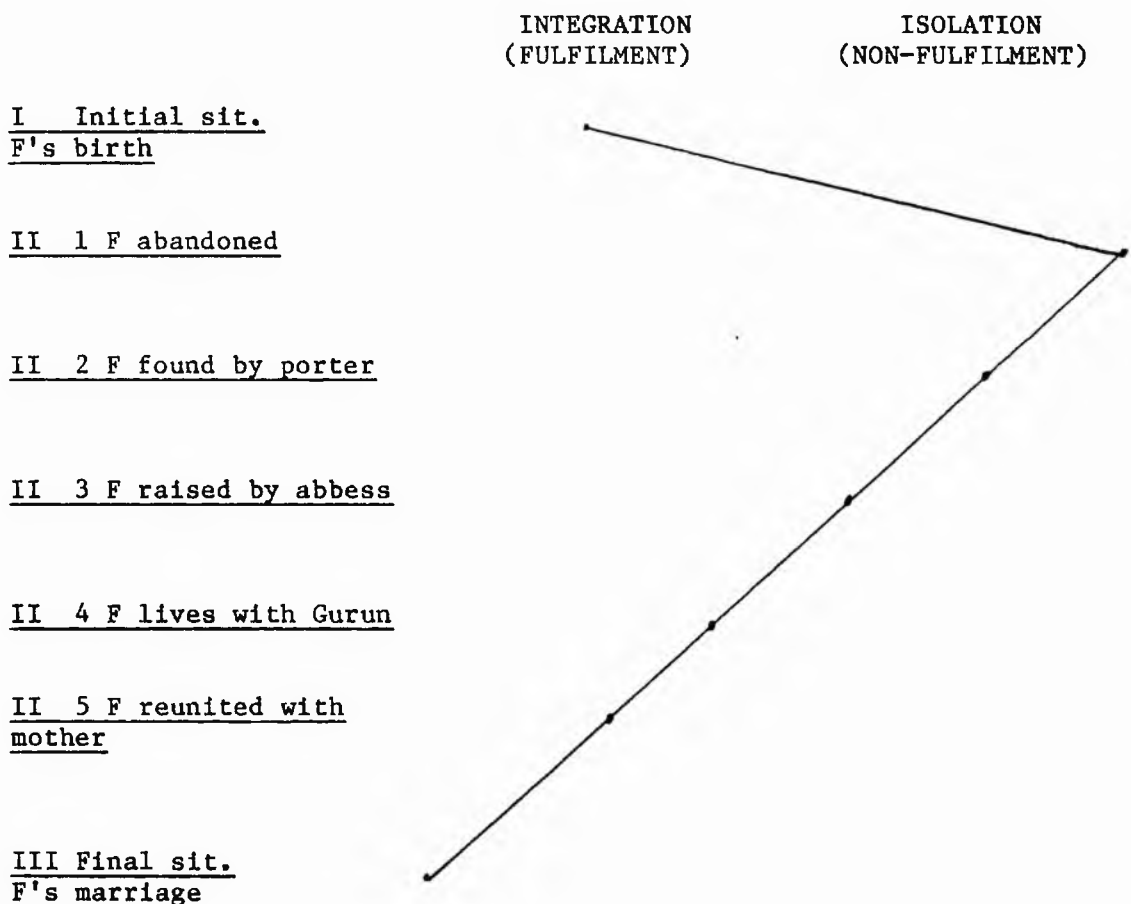
We see that in terms of the narrative structure, the proposed marriage between Codre and Gurun serves a positive role as the key to the reunion between mother and daughter, thereby enabling Fresne to achieve both personal and social fulfilment. This is a reversal of its superficial appearance as an ultimate obstacle to such fulfilment. It is because it is a threat unrealised that it contributes to the positive progression in the narrative rather than introducing a reversal ~~of~~ it<sup>5</sup>.

### III Final Situation

The marriage of Gurun and Fresne represents the perfect fusion of social and personal fulfilment, to which Fresne has been destined by the terms defined at the time of her birth at the beginning of the lai. Thus this final situation represents both a compensation for and a negation of the period of social and personal non-fulfilment and partial fulfilment suffered by Fresne (493-510).

The narrative, defined by Fresne's experiences from the time of her birth to the time of her marriage, is developed in clearly definable segments. Yet, from the moment of rupture in relations between Fresne and her mother there has been the potential for their reconciliation, with each stage of Fresne's experiences the key to the next, and thus to her final social and personal fulfilment. It is because of the ring and the coverlet left with her at the time of her abandonment, that the porter recognises Fresne to be of noble birth and gives her over to the abbess for her upbringing. It is

because of her upbringing in the convent that Gurun meets her; it is because of her relationship with Gurun that she is reunited with her mother, and, as we have seen, it is this that allows her to marry Gurun. Thus each segment in Fresne's life has an intrinsic significance as a stage towards reintegration, and the added value of serving as a springboard to the next stage. The structure of the lai as a whole is defined by Fresne's experiences, as a swift movement into extreme isolation, followed by a reversal with a gradual progression to complete fulfilment as a fusion of personal desires and social expectations. This structure appears clearly from a simple diagram: -



## BISCLAVRET

### I Initial Situation

Bisclavret appears to a large extent well integrated into an existence that is both socially and personally fulfilling, as an active knight, good vassal, loved and loving husband. The situation is unconventional and less than perfect, however, because of his becoming a wolf for three days a week. There is, nonetheless, an equilibrium in this existence, so that his tendency to lycanthropy does not in any way interfere with his human existence in society (15-96).

### II Isolation

This period of social and personal isolation corresponds to the period Bisclavret spends as a wolf. There are, however, a number of distinct stages within this.

#### II 1. Loss of Love

It is the loss of his wife's love that forces Bisclavret into his existence as a wolf by the removal of his clothes (97-134).

#### II 2. Extreme Physical and Social Isolation

Bisclavret's year of life as a wolf in the forest forces him not only to be isolated from the chivalric society that is his natural environment, but also from all human contact and all forms of civilisation (135).

#### II 3. First Step towards Social Integration

Through the encounter with the King, Bisclavret is restored to basic contact with humanity and with courtly society. This meeting leads

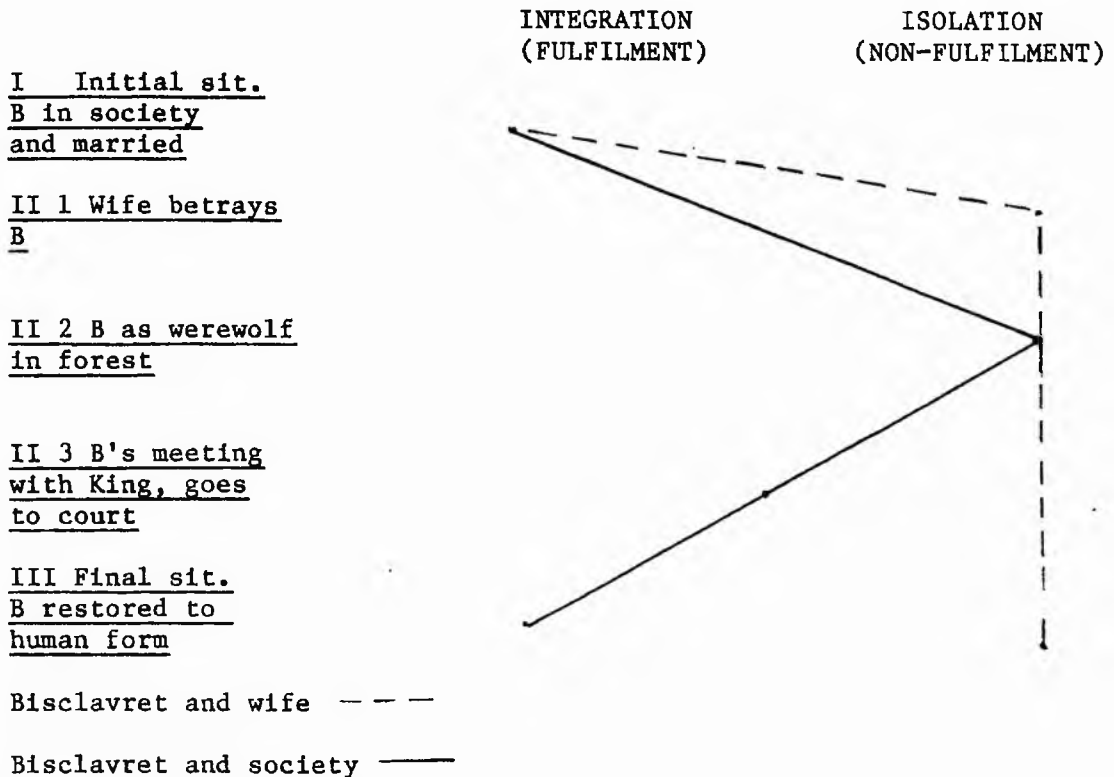
directly to his being taken by the King to the court. This is however only partial social reintegration as he still remains unable to participate actively in this society<sup>6</sup> (136-274).

### III Final Situation: Social Reintegration

Bisclavret is returned to human form, this is the essential step towards his full social integration, allowing him to be restored to an active life within Breton society as a knight and favoured vassal. In social terms this is a return to the initial situation (there is no reference to whether he will continue to become a wolf for three days a week).

There is, however, no restoration to the personal fulfilment that he initially enjoyed with his wife<sup>7</sup>, the estrangement between them being irreconcilable (273-304).

Clearly the narrative structure is defined in terms of Bisclavret's experiences, relating to changes both in his personal relationship with his wife and in his social relationships with the King in particular but also with society in the widest sense. The crucial factor in both is the fact of Bisclavret's lycanthropy; the pattern described by the former, in response to this, being totally linear - from fulfilment to non-fulfilment - that of the latter being circular: -



Thus we see that in the course of the lai, Bisclavret loses the balance of social and personal fulfilment that characterises his initial situation.

Through her exploitation of particular motifs through the text, of parallels and reversals, Marie creates a narrative that is tightly and coherently structured. This appears primarily through her emphasis on Bisclavret's clothes. Just as the deprivation of his clothes forces him to remain as a wolf, so the restitution of his clothes allows him to return to human form. There is almost a ritualistic importance attached to the removal and restitution of the clothes, that focuses upon their significance and that of his appearance as human and as wolf. The two actions appear as pendants to each other within the structure of the lai as a whole. They provide the two cataclysmic moments in the narrative, the former precipitating Bisclavret into complete social isolation, the

latter enabling him to return to full social integration.

Through her use of other particular parallels and reversals, Marie is able through her final solution to assert a justice that would be absent from a tale that was wholly circular, in terms of including a reconciliation between Bisclavret and his wife.

The lai indeed ends with as much emphasis on the fact of the wife being sent into exile with her lover as on the fact of Bisclavret's own social reintegration. It is the combination of both aspects equally that affirm the final justice of the story. The exiling of the wife represents eye for an eye justice, in offering a parallel with Bisclavret's own experience of social isolation<sup>8</sup>. Just as Bisclavret has had to suffer for being less than human in his appearance, so does his wife, permanently disfigured after Bisclavret has ripped off her nose. Just as Bisclavret has had to suffer the rigours of exclusion from society while living in the forest, so the wife suffers such social and physical isolation also<sup>9</sup>.

There is particular emphasis on the fact of the wife's ultimate fate being a just punishment for her behaviour to Bisclavret. Just as she has been directly instrumental in causing him to suffer social isolation, so Bisclavret is directly instrumental in causing her to endure a similar experience. The difference is that whereas the wife's punishment is imposed with the validity of socially recognised authority, the wife had to conceal her actions against Bisclavret, knowing them to be contrary to any standards of justice in society (127-34). Thus public justice compensates for private injustice, introducing a balance that compensates for the loss of the balance initially enjoyed by Bisclavret, a loss made inevitable

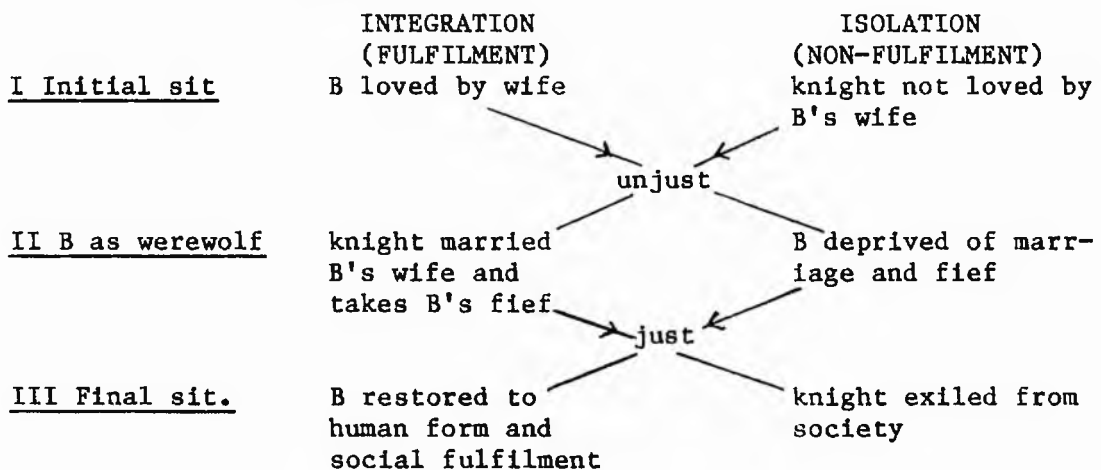
by the wife's treatment of Bisclavret.

Marie further indicates the justice of the final situation for Bisclavret through the contrast between his experiences and those of the knight who becomes his wife's second husband. As Bisclavret suffers social and personal non-fulfilment as a direct result of his wife's betrayal, so the knight inversely benefits in the same ways. It is Bisclavret's rightful position in society - as lord over his fief - and in personal relationships - as the bigamous husband of Bisclavret's wife - that the knight unjustly claims<sup>10</sup>. It is the benefits of this position that the knight unlawfully reaps, evidenced by the description of him in his fine clothes which is in contrast to Bisclavret's appearance as a werewolf, deprived of his seigniorial and marital rights: -

Li chevaliers i est alez  
Richement e bien aturnez,  
Ki la femme Bisclavret ot.

Bisclavret 191-93

We can see how this contrast between the two men and their experiences in terms of social personal fulfilment are emphasised through the structure of the lai: -



It is evident from this cross-over pattern the extent to the notions of justice and injustice are emphasised through the lai. There is



injustice not only Bisclavret's being forced into isolation, but also, reinforcing this injustice, is the injustice of the lover's benefitting from this to enjoy a degree of social fulfilment that is unwarranted. Equally the justice of Bisclavret's eventual social reintegration is reinforced by the justice of the knight's exile.

### LANVAL

In terms of narrative structure, Lanval is more complex than any other lai, built up of a number of patterns relating to the various relationships between Lanval and other characters - the fairy, the King, the Queen, the knights of the court. Each of these patterns is constructed through parallels and reversals; these serve also to create similarities and contrasts between the different relationships.

At its most basic the story traces Lanval's experiences from an initial situation to one that is in every way a reversal of it. Initially Lanval is living within the society of Arthur's court, keen to be an active member of it, but prevented from being so by the withdrawal of royal favour. He has apparently no interest in love, and is a passive figure, accepting the will of others over his life and happiness as beyond his control. By the end of the lai, Lanval has given up for ever his life as an active knight and the Arthurian court, despite being restored to the King's favour. Now all his interest is in achieving fulfilment in love, and he is assertive in his efforts towards such fulfilment.

The lai in fact falls naturally into two sections (5-200; 201-646), each forcing Lanval to confront the implications of his personal and

social relationships; the second containing many echoes of the first, echoes which set in relief the fundamental differences.

## I Initial Situation

Lanval is living within the Arthurian court, having served Arthur as a good vassal and active knight. He is keen to prove his worth in social terms and to be integrated in this society.

Apparently he has no interest in love at this stage.

## II 1. Social Non-Fulfilment

i) The breakdown of the lord-vassal relationship is brought about by Arthur's unintentional failure to reward Lanval for his services. Lanval as a result becomes isolated within the court, unable to participate in it. His position is made worse by the deliberate indifference of the knights of the court (5-38).

ii) Lanval physically isolates himself from the court society by riding out of the town, expressive of his sorrow at not being socially integrated (39-52).

iii) The encounter with the fairy leads directly to Lanval's enjoying fulfilment in love. This represents his first contact with the Other World (53-200).

iv) The consequences of the encounter with the fairy are both in social and personal fulfilment, enjoyed by Lanval after his return to the Arthurian Court (201-218).

II 2. The Celebrations of the Feast of Saint John

i) Lanval is accidentally excluded by the knights from the celebrations (219-32).

ii) The knights on realising their mistake invite Lanval to join them in courtly amusements (233-59).

iii) Lanval physically isolates himself from the courtly company, expressive of his having little interest in being fully integrated into Arthurian society. His concern is with fulfilment in love, indicated by his thoughts of his mistress (253-58).

iv) The Queen offers Lanval her love, which he repudiates (259-302).

II 3. The Aftermath of the Encounter with the Queen

i) The Queen angered by Lanval's rejection, rouses the King's anger against Lanval, causing him to be socially isolated within the court. Lanval also loses the fulfilment in love he has enjoyed as a result of revealing the existence of his mistress (303-414).

The social and personal non-fulfilment suffered by Lanval in direct consequence of his encounter with the Queen stand in contrast to the consequences of his initial encounter with the fairy. As at the beginning of the lai, Lanval suffers a loss of royal favour.

ii) The proceedings of the trial cause Lanval to be an outsider within the court, but the feudal justice with which the King acts allows the chance for Lanval's social reintegration (415-71).

iii) The Fairy comes to the trial to prove Lanval's innocence

(472-624).

iv) Arthur and the court acquit Lanval, offering him, thereby the chance of complete social reintegration (625-29).

v) Lanval rides out from the Arthurian court, renouncing his chances of fulfilment in chivalric society.

His departure is with the fairy, in pursuit of fulfilment in love (630-43).

### III Final Situation

Lanval is in the Other World, never to return to the Real World, presumably, but not assuredly, fulfilled in his relationship with the fairy (644-46).

From this outline of the developments of the narrative of the lai of Lanval, we already see to some extent the way in which it is articulated in relation to changes in Lanval's social and personal relationships, through a series of encounters and confrontations. The consequences of each confrontation/encounter are felt by Lanval in terms of movements between varying degrees of personal and social fulfilment and non-fulfilment, which in gradual steps take him towards his final renunciation of social fulfilment and the Real World, for the sake of fulfilment in love in the Other World. The interaction between the two aspects - love and society - and the extent to which the narrative structure is defined by the developments in Lanval's personal and social relationships can be seen from a schema: -

## INTEGRATION (FULFILMENT)

ISOLATION  
(NON-FULFILMENT)

I Initial sit.  
L at court

II 1 1 A fails  
to reward L

l ii L rides  
out of court

l iii L meets  
fairy

1 ivL to court

II 2 1 L forgotten  
by knights

2 ii L included in  
court festivities

2 iii L goes apart  
from court company

2 iv L meets Queen

II 3 i L loses fairy's  
love; A's anger

3 ii the trial

3 iii fairy comes  
to trial

3 iv A acquits L

3 v L leaves court

### III L in Avalon

## Lanval and society ———

Lanval and love relationship with fairy — — —

From this it is evident that Lanval's relationships are extremely dynamic forces within his own life and thereby within the structure of the narrative. The developments in these relationships appear through Marie's focus upon key situations, which appear as analogous with others but which are in fact mirror images. For an appreciation of how tightly Marie has composed the structure of the lai, it is necessary to examine the way in which she constructs her narrative patterns on the basis of parallels and reversals.

In broad lines the similarities and differences between the two main sections of the lai emerge from diagrams indicating the interaction between changes in Lanval's position in society and developments in his relationships both with Arthur and with the fairy; the two essential relationships in the lai, appearing as polarities in Lanval's existence.

Lanval's Relationship with Arthur:

SOCIAL INTEGRATION  
(FULFILMENT)

SOCIAL ISOLATION  
(NON-FULFILMENT)

I L active in court  
(apparently integrated)

↓  
II 2 i L loses A's favour  
(not rewarded for services)

II 1 ii-iii L isolated from  
society (unable to participate  
actively in court life)

-----  
II 1 iv L active in court  
(apparently integrated)

↓  
II 3 i L loses A's favour  
(A's anger over the Queen)

II 3 i, ii, iii L isolated  
from society (unable to parti-  
cipate actively in court life)

II 3 iv L has chance of social  
reintegration (acquitted at  
trial by A)

This indicates the extent to which the second section of the lai is a repeat of the first, with the loss of the King's favour - albeit in different circumstances - directly causing Lanval to become socially isolated, even when physically still within the court, because of being deprived of the means of participating actively in it. There is, however, a crucial final stage in the second section for which there is no parallel in the first, this is the active re-establishment of good relations between Arthur and Lanval, through Lanval's being proven innocent at the trial.

Lanval's Relationship with the Fairy:

SOCIAL INTEGRATION  
(FULFILMENT)

SOCIAL ISOLATION  
(NON-FULFILMENT)

I L at A's court  
(lack of love fulfilment)

II 1 i-ii L after loss of A's  
favour (lack of love fulfilment)

II 1 iii Intervention of fairy  
(first meeting)

II 1 iv L returns to court  
(fulfilment in love)

-----

II 1 iv L at A's court  
(fulfilment in love)

II 3 i, ii L after loss of A's  
favour (lack of love fulfilment)

II 3 iii Intervention of fairy  
(at trial)

II 3 iv L returns to court  
favour (non-fulfilment in love)

II 3 v L leaves court (for  
fulfilment in love)

Again, through focusing on Lanval's relationship with the fairy, we are struck by the repeat pattern that is presented through the

second section in relation to the first, although leading through to a final situation of Lanval's definitive self-isolation from society, which is a reversal of Lanval's situation at the end of the first section.

These two diagrams point to the essential differences between the role that Arthur plays in Lanval's existence in social terms, and of the fairy. Twice the King appears as a negative force, compelling Lanval into a state of social isolation, and once, finally, as a positive force. In contrast, the fairy twice acts directly as a positive force upon Lanval, enabling him to enjoy a greater degree of social fulfilment than has previously been possible. Finally, although not actively instrumental in causing Lanval's departure from the court, she is the reason for it. The fairy's relationship with Lanval also introduces the dimension of Lanval's fulfilment/non-fulfilment in love. Through this, too, we see how the two main narrative sections of the lai interact through a series of parallels and reversals.

The extent to which there is this interaction between the two sections, not only at the level of broad structural patterns, can only emerge from a detailed analysis of the two.

I	L fulfilling his role in society at A's court	II a iv	L fulfilling his role in society at A's court
II 1	L loses A's favour i-ii (withholding of fiefs)	II 3 1-11	L loses A's favour (anger over Queen)
	A's behaviour unjust (bad feudal lord)	X	A's behaviour just (good feudal lord)
	A's behaviour is unintentional and tacit (19)	X	A's behaviour is deliberate and official (325-28; 359-404; 414-506)
	L is wholly innocent	//	L is partly innocent



A's behaviour prevents L from actively fulfilling his role in society (Lack of money) (32-38)	//	A's behaviour prevents L from actively fulfilling his role in society (the trial)
II 1 The knights contribute to L's social isolation (their animosity) (21-26)	X	II 3 1-ii The knights try to alleviate L's social isolation (their friendship) (400-14; 428-30; 478-82)
L is unhappy in his sense of isolation and lack of fulfilment (33-34; 51-52)	//	L is unhappy in his sense of isolation and lack of fulfilment (332-80; 407-14)
L's concern is for loss of social fulfilment (no interest in love)	X	L's concern is for loss of love fulfilment more than for social non-fulfilment (33;-57)
II 1 Intervention of fairy iii (first meeting)	//	II 3 iii Intervention of fairy (at trial)
This preceeded by arrival of two maidens (55-66)	//	This preceeded by arrival of two maidens (472-540)
Fairy offers love (110-16)	X	Fairy makes no offer of love.
II 1 Fairy provides means for L's social reintegration (gifts) 201-14	//	Fairy provides means for L's social reintegration (proof of his innocence) (615-24)
No mention of A's intervention to allow L's social reintegration	X	A directly responsible for L's chance to be socially reintegrated (acquitting L at trial) (625-27)
L happy to be socially reintegrated	X	L not interested in social fulfilment
Love and social fulfilment in balance for L at court (215-18)	X	No balance possible between love and social fulfilment for L at court
	II 3 iv	L leaves court in search of fulfilment in love in Avalon (633-46)

This analysis of the two main sections of the narrative indicates how Marie uses detail to highlight the parallels and reversals in the structural patterns between the two. It is evident how the developments in the narrative are, equally in both sections, defined

by developments in Lanval's relationships with Arthur and the fairy, and also by changes in Lanval's attitude towards both social and personal fulfilment. It is these changes in Lanval's own attitude that primarily determines that the ending of the lai as a whole should be quite different from the ending of the first section. This is, however, clearly in response to the change in the fairy's attitude towards him: by the end of the lai the fairy makes it clear that Lanval will no longer have any chance of enjoying her love if he remains within Arthur's court, this is a fundamental difference from the situation at the end of the first section. That Lanval should choose to leave Arthur's court is because of his having come to value love more than fulfilment in society. That this is to be read as a positive gesture for the sake of love, rather than as a negative repudiation of society is further indicated through the changes in the figure of the King in relation to Lanval<sup>11</sup>.

The relationship in structural terms between these two sections of the text serves, therefore, to indicate the underlying significance of the lai as a whole as a celebration of love far more than as a condemnation of Arthurian society.

Although this structural relationship is primarily defined through the developments in Lanval's relationships with the King and with the fairy, it is further reinforced through the changes in Lanval's relationship with the knights of the Arthurian court. This relationship follows the same pattern of reversal as does that between Lanval and Arthur; like Arthur, the knights are transformed from being socially negative forces against Lanval at the beginning of the lai to being actively positive in their behaviour towards him

by the end.

The relationship between Lanval and the knights is further exploited to contribute to the structural cohesion of the lai as a whole, through their role in the central episode, that of the festivities of Saint John, which has so far been excluded from this analysis.

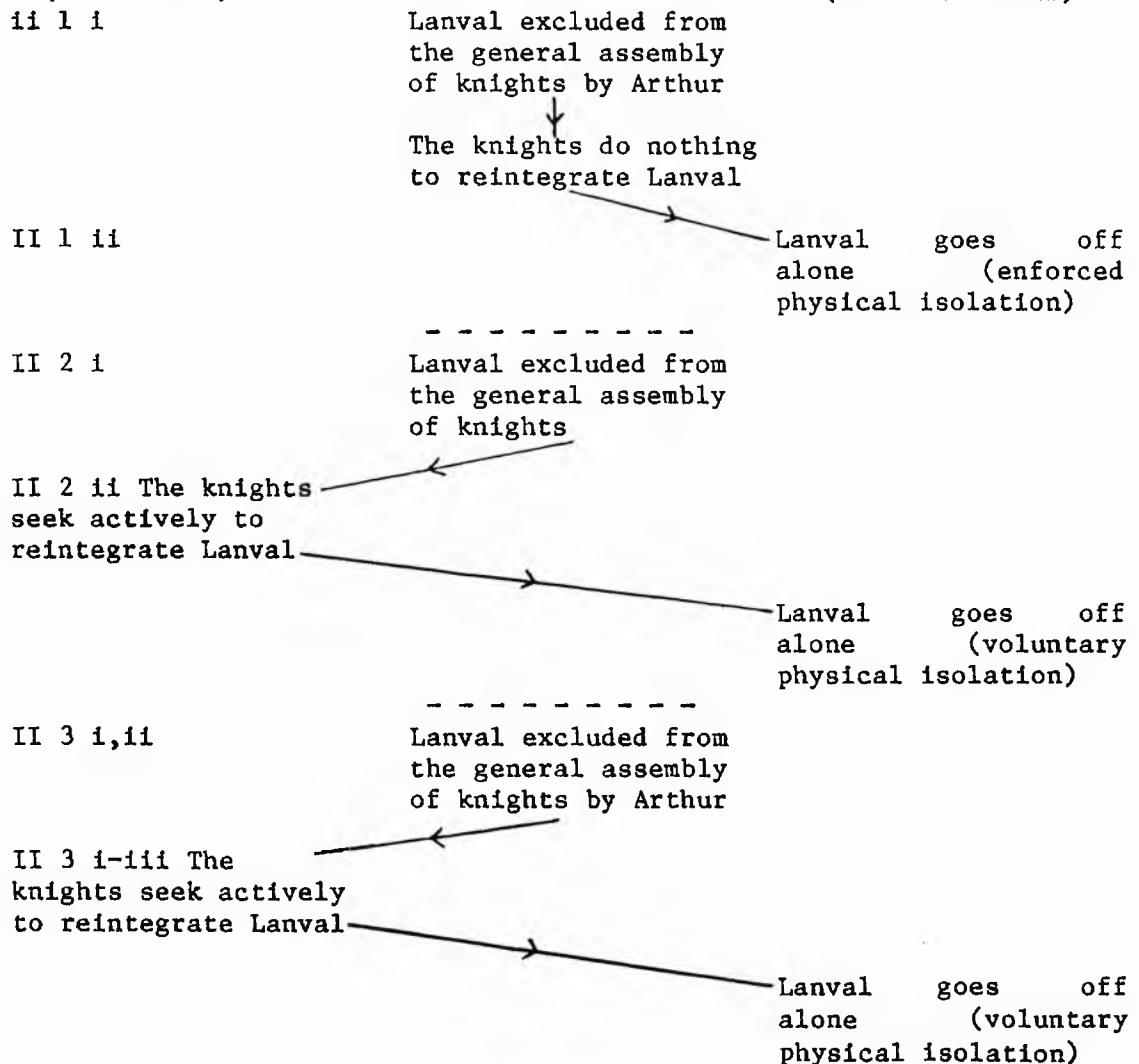
Although it is only the final incident in this episode - Lanval's confrontation with the Queen - that contributes directly to the narrative development of the lai, the whole episode is integral to the narrative. It is related to the other episodes through parallels and reversals in the same way that the other episodes are related to each other; by this means, the central themes of the lai - the opposition between society and love, the Real World and the Other World - are further focused upon, and thereby emphasised. The internal structure of this episode, like that of the other episodes, is based on developments in Lanval's social and personal relationships. In this case, the focus is upon his relationships with the Arthurian knights, and, more crucially, with the Queen. These are set alongside the changes that are occurring independently in Lanval himself in his perception of the relative importance of personal and social fulfilment for him as an individual. In this, then, the episode appears as important for being transitional, anticipating Lanval's final choice between love and society.

It is transitional also in depicting the change in the behaviour of the Arthurian court towards Lanval, from one that is initially negative to one that is ultimately positive and supportive. We have seen how this transformation is presented through the relationship between Arthur and Lanval, but the significance of Arthurian society

as presented in this lai extends beyond the relationship between two individuals. The court represents feudal, chivalric society as is indicated through Marie's emphasis on the relationship between Lanval and the knights of this court. Through this relationship the transformation through the lai of a court that is initially degenerate and uncaring to one that is a model in its upholding of justice is underlined. The behaviour of the knights towards Lanval in this episode appears in significant relation to their behaviour in the earlier and later episodes. In all three this relationship directly contributes to Lanval's position in the court, affecting the degree to which he can be said to be socially integrated or not. These aspects can be seen from the following diagram: -

SOCIAL INTEGRATION  
(FULFILMENT)

SOCIAL ISOLATION  
(NON-FULFILMENT)



If the role of Lanval's relationship with the knights serves to complement that between Lanval and the King, the role of Lanval's relationship with the Queen is to present a complete contrast with that between him and the fairy.

We have seen that the interaction between the two main episodes of the lai is defined as much by the developments in the love relationship as it is by the developments in the feudal relationship. In each it is the intervention of the fairy that is cataclysmic. In this episode it is the intervention of the Queen that serves as a cataclysm in Lanval's life, and in particular in relation to his position within court society. There are certain similarities between the Queen's intervention here and that of the fairy in the other episodes, in particular that of Lanval's first encounter with the fairy - the Queen, like the fairy, takes the initiative in offering her love to Lanval. The contrast between these two women in their impact upon Lanval's life is, however, more significant than the superficial similarities. Whereas the intervention of the fairy, on both occasions, serves directly to provide Lanval with a degree of social fulfilment that has been lacking from his life, the intervention of the Queen serves to deprive him of the degree of social fulfilment that he has been enjoying.

The following diagram indicates the extent to which the central episode appears as a mirror image of the other two episodes through the contrast between the two women in their relationship with Lanval: -

SOCIAL INTEGRATION  
(FULFILMENT)

SOCIAL ISOLATION  
(NON-FULFILMENT)

II 1 ii

Lanval isolated from society

II 1 iii

Intervention of fairy as a  
gesture of love (which L  
accepts)

II 1 iv L reintegrated into  
society (because of fairy)

-----

II 1 iv-2 ii L integrated  
in society

II 2 iv Intervention of Queen  
as a gesture of love (which L  
rejects)

II 3 i

L isolated from society  
(because of Queen)

-----

II 3 ii

L isolated from society

II 3 iii

Intervention of fairy as a  
gesture of love

II 3 iv L given every chance  
of integration in society  
(because of fairy)

II 3 v

L isolates himself from society

The negative character of the Queen, as revealed through the relationship with Lanval, is important in highlighting the positive character of the fairy, which is enhanced by the contrast<sup>12</sup>. We see from the diagram above that this contrast is significant not only in terms of the two women as individuals - one offering good love, the other offering a dishonest love. Marie emphasises the contrast and indicates its wider implications by weaving it into the narrative structure. This appears particularly from a comparison of the

episode of Lanval's first meeting with the fairy with this episode centring on his encounter with the Queen. In both cases the consequences are felt by Lanval in social terms - as indicated in the diagram - and also in personal terms. As elsewhere in the lai, it is through the exploitation of superficial similarities between the two episodes, that Marie directs the reader's attention to the fundamental differences. This emerges from a detailed analysis of the relationship between the episodes, with particular focus on the role of the two women within each of them.

II 1 i	L prevented from being integrated in court society (unpopular with knights)	X	II 2 ii	L integrated in court society (included in festivities with the knights)
	L has apparently no interest in love (no love fulfilment)	X		love is very important to L (fulfilled in love for fairy)
II 1 ii	L physically isolated (rides out from court alone)	//	II 2 iii	L physically isolated (goes apart from company of knights)
	L's isolation forced upon him by negative attitude of court society in which he would wish to be integrated	X		L's isolation voluntary despite positive attitude of court society he has little interest in it.
II 1 iii	Intervention of lady who loves him (fairy)	//	II 2 iv	Intervention of lady who loves him (Queen)
	Lady (fairy) takes initiative in offering love	//		Lady (Queen) takes initiative in offering love
	Lady (fairy) is from Other World	X		Lady (Queen) is central in court society (Real World).
	L accepts offer of love	X		L rejects offer of love
II 1 iv	L enjoys fulfilment in love directly as result of the encounter with the fairy	X	II 2 v	L loses fulfilment in love directly as result of the encounter with the Queen
	L enjoys fulfilment in society directly as result of encounter with fairy	X		L loses fulfilment in society directly as result of encounter with Queen.

With Lanval, Marie has constructed a lai in which no detail is gratuitous, each contributing to the structure of the narrative either directly or by serving to underline the patterns of parallels and reversals which compose this structure. The intricacy of the interrelating patterns creates a narrative entity that is both highly complex and deeply cohesive, the whole based on an opposition between society and love, the Real World and the Other World, with Lanval as the pivotal figure. Through these patterns the significance of the lai emerges unambiguously, as they enable the reader to focus upon the developments in Lanval's social and personal relationships. None of these is static, each constantly altering, each in itself and in relation to others. These changes, which define the articulations of the narrative, are a result both of shifts in the attitudes of others towards Lanval - Arthur, the knights, the fairy and the Queen - and in Lanval's own attitudes towards both love and society. It is the dichotomy between the two that is clearly emphasised through the structure; as Arthurian society is transformed from a negative to a positive role, so, inversely, Lanval makes the transition from a being primarily concerned with achieving fulfilment in social terms to one concerned exclusively with fulfilment in love.

#### DEUS AMANZ

The focus in Deus Amanz is entirely directed at the relationship between the King's daughter and her suitor, it is the developments in this relationship which define the narrative structure.

#### I Initial Situation

The lovers enjoy a degree of fulfilment, albeit limited, in their



love for each other (7-74).

## II Attempts towards Marriage

The action in the lai is wholly concerned with the efforts of the lovers towards unrestricted union in their love through marriage. This would enable them to achieve a far greater degree of fulfilment both in social and in personal terms. Both stages in the action are directed towards this end (75-212).

II 1. The boy gets the strength-giving potion from the girl's aunt.

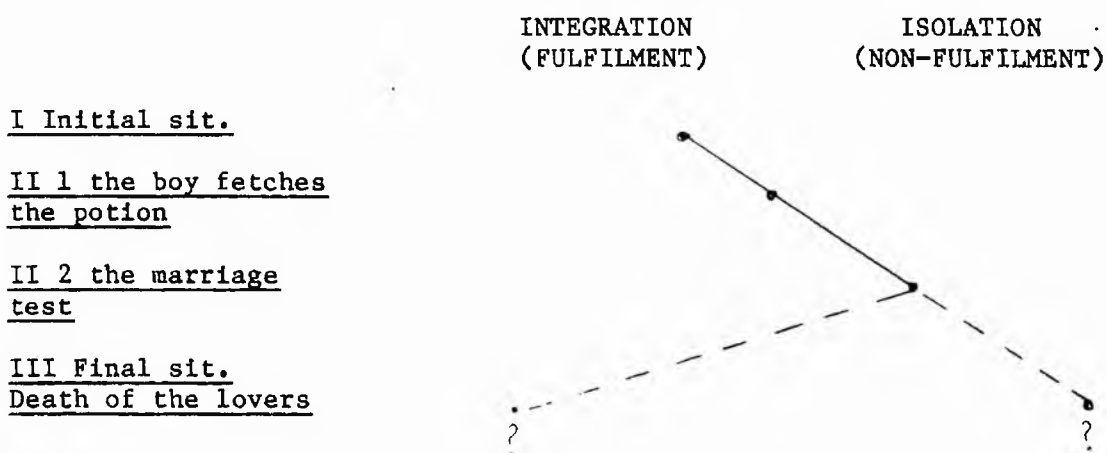
II 2. The boy carries the girl up the hill.

## III Final Situation

The death of the lovers. This prevents them from ever achieving the degree of fulfilment to which they have been aspiring. It also inevitably brings to an end the relationship they have hitherto enjoyed. Death appears, thus, as the ultimate form of non-fulfilment. There is however the potential, suggested by the text, for death to be the ultimate release from earthly restrictions upon love, allowing love, through transcendence of death, to achieve a greater degree of fulfilment than could be possible in any situation in life (213-38).

There is a basic similarity between the structure of Deus Amanz and that of Equitan. In both a degree of fulfilment in love by the lovers, but in a relationship that is not sanctioned by society. It is through attempts at integrating this love relationship into society that the lovers die: the means denying them of the goal which was their purpose. There is, however, the fundamental

difference that the marriage aspired to in Equitan is dishonourable, unworthy of fulfilment, whereas that sought by the lovers in Deus Amanz is based on honest love, worthy of fulfilment. The structure of Deus Amanz, like that of Equitan, can be seen in terms of a linear progression towards social and personal fulfilment, with an abrupt ricochet at the end, as this ambition becomes inaccessible<sup>13</sup>. Here, however, unlike in Equitan, the possibility of love transcending death must also be recognised.



#### YONEC

In this lai there is no attempt to achieve a balance between fulfilment in love and fulfilment in social terms. Love, as a positive force associated with the Other World, is presented throughout the text in opposition to the restrictive force of society imposed in the Real World. This opposition is expressed through the contrast in the characters of Muldumarec and the lady's husband. The lady appears, then, as the pivotal figure within the narrative, its structure determined in relation primarily to her experiences. There is much emphasis on the need for the three main characters - the lady, Muldumarec and Yonec - to fulfil their destiny. This involves fulfilment in the love relationship between Muldumarec and the lady, also fulfilment in the parent-child relationship between Yonec and both of his parents. The two types

of relationship are closely connected, with the three characters bound together in responsibilities to each other which have to be observed if fulfilment is to be achieved by any of them. Thus, although, by the end of the lai, two of the main characters are dead, the final note is positive, as it is only at this stage that each of them has fulfilled his/her destiny.

### I Initial Situation

The lady as mal-mariée is in every sense unfulfilled, physically isolated and prevented from having any contact with society, being immured by her husband. She is also lacking fulfilment in personal terms (11-104).

### II 1. Fulfilment in Love

Muldumarec comes to the lady and they enjoy a period of happiness and fulfilment in love in their relationship (105-256).

### II 2. Loss of Fulfilment in Love

The discovery by the husband of the relationship, and the consequent death of Muldumarec bring the love relationship to an end.

The bond between Muldumarec and the lady continues, nonetheless, in the form of her responsibility to him to bring up their son, Yonec, so that he will be able to avenge his father's murder.

Thus, although the lady is apparently forced to endure the same experience of a loveless marriage, the pattern described is not circular, but linear, as this is a necessary stage towards the culmination of her relationship with Muldumarec (257-496).

### III Final Situation

The union of Muldumarec and the lady in death. There is a sense of completeness in this; the lady dies once Yonec has avenged his father's death and is accepted by his father's people as Muldumarec's heir to be their rightful lord in the Other World. It is at this point of justice having been asserted by the terms of the Other World, to compensate for the injustice that has been imposed by the force of the Real World (the husband), that the lady achieved fulfilment in her life. Her death appears then as both natural and just (497-554).

As well as describing the development of the lady's relationship with Muldumarec through to their final union in death, the lai traces Yonec's life from birth to his being acknowledged as his father's heir. This appears as a straight course to the fulfilment of his rightful destiny.

INTEGRATION  
(FULFILMENT)

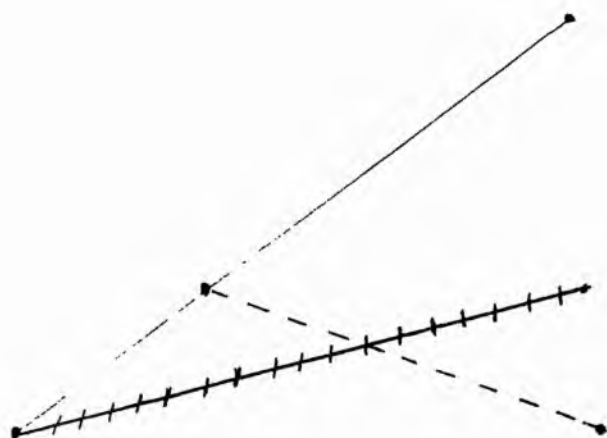
ISOLATION  
(NON-FULFILMENT)

I Initial sit.  
Lady in unhappy  
marriage

II 1 love relation-  
ship between M and lady

II 2 M's death:  
loss of relationship

III Final sit.  
union in death of M  
and lady. Y as king



Lady and love (destiny) ——— ——— ———

Yonec ——— ——— ———

### LAUSTIC

The lai concentrates on the relationship between the lovers, a relationship that can provide only limited personal fulfilment and can never be integrated into society.

It is similar to Deus Amanz in structure, tracing a relationship in which a degree of fulfilment is enjoyed initially but which is lost through a death. Here too there can be the suggestion that the love itself is sublimated through the death to survive despite the lack of fulfilment in the material world.

#### I Initial Situation

The lovers are able to talk through their windows, thereby enjoying a limited degree of fulfilment in love (7-78).

#### II The Intervention of the Husband

The husband kills the nightingale, thereby depriving the lovers of the happiness they have had in their relationship (79-144).

#### III Final Situation

The lovers are henceforth physically separated, having lost the chance of fulfilment in love they initially enjoyed.

In keeping the dead nightingale in a casket the knight retains a memorial to the love, thereby allowing the love to survive, transcending the physical separation (145-56).

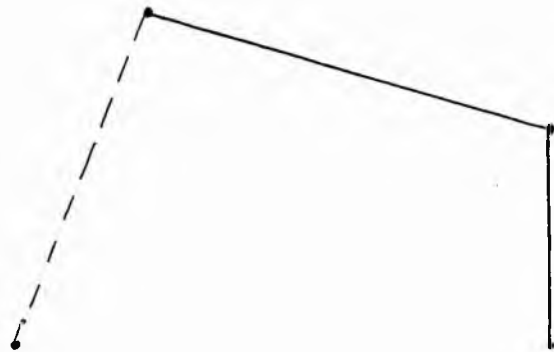
I Initial sit.  
lovers fulfilled

II husband kills  
nightingale

III Final sit.  
the lovers parted  
the nightingale  
in the casket

INTEGRATION  
(FULFILMENT)

ISOLATION  
(NON-FULFILMENT)



### MILUN

The focus in this lai is both on the relationship between Milun and the lady as lovers and that between them both, as parents, and their son. Although the three relationships ultimately converge, allowing the three main characters to achieve unprecedented fulfilment in both social and personal terms, the interaction between the parent-child relationship and the love relationship is not always so happily entwined.

#### I Initial Situation

Milun and the lady enjoy a love relationship, which, although necessarily restricted to some extent because of not being sanctioned by society, provides them with a great deal of personal fulfilment (9-54).

#### II 1. The Birth of the Son

It is the birth of their son that indicates the instability of the relationship (55-86).

#### II 2. The Separation of the Lovers; the Separation of Parents & Son

The son is taken to the lady's sister to be brought up apart from his parents.

At the same time the parents are also physically separated and without contact. Mylun travels as an active knight; the lady is compelled into a marriage of social convenience. Thus this period of personal non-fulfilment coincides with a period of fulfilment in social terms (87-150).

### II 3. The Swan as Messenger

Contact, albeit indirect, is re-established between the lovers, by means of the swan that carries letters between them.

At the same time their son is able to make the first transition from total isolation from his parents; learning of his father's identity, the son seeks to win himself a reputation as a knight that will make him worthy to be Milun's son.

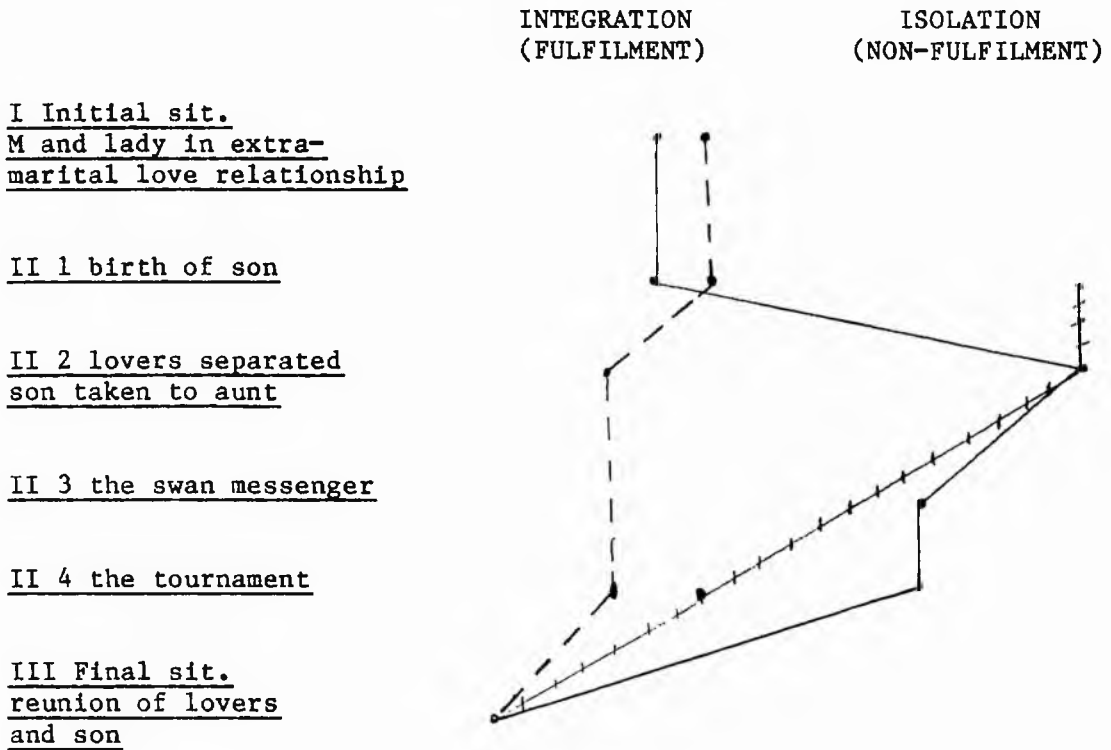
### II 4. The Tournament

The tournament brings about the reunion of father and son (379-500). As in Fresne, the potential for this reunion has been allowed for from the time of the separation. Here too a ring is left with the new born child which serves to identify the son as an adult; thus the bond between parent and child is never completely severed, despite the physical separation.

### III Final Situation: Permanent Reunion of the Lovers together with their Son

The reunion of Milun and the son leads directly to the reunion of the lady with both her lover and her son. The triple reunion allows the three main characters to achieve a greater degree of personal fulfilment than has previously been possible. The relationships are consolidated through the marriage of Milun and the lady. Thus from

existing concealed from and in defiance of society the relationships between Milun, the lady and their son are now finally integrated into society, as a fusion of personal and social fulfilment, aspects which have previously existed as opposites (501-30).



Love relationship between Milun and Lady ———

Milun and lady in society — — —

Relationship between son and parents — / / /  
 (social and personal)

The lai can be seen as falling into two sections, the first describing the original relationship between Milun and the lady, to the point of their son's birth and their subsequent separation; the second the period of the lady's marriage, during which they communicate through means of the swan, till their reunion. In both sections the focus is primarily on the relationship between Milun and the lady, which exists in a certain continuum although undergoing changes in its nature. At the end of both sections a dramatic change is brought about in their relationship through the



impact in their lives of the son, who has been absent from their existence. If we compare the two sections of the lai in terms of the development in the relationship between the lovers and of the role of the son within that relationship we find that there are both parallels and reversals: -

I	M and lady enjoy a degree of personal fulfilment in their relationship	//	II 3	M and lady enjoy a degree of personal fulfilment in their relationship
	this is restricted because the relationship must be concealed from society being extra-marital	//		this is restricted because the relationship must be concealed from society being extra-marital
II 1	Birth of son	//	II 4	M's reunion with son at tournament.
II 2	Separation of M and lady	X	III	Reunion of M and lady
	Separation of parents and son	X		Reunion of parents and son
	Marriage of lady as social obligation, contrary to love	X		Marriage of lady (Milun) love fulfilled in reconciliation with society

The consequences of the appearance of a son into the lives of Milun and the lady are negative in the first section, whereas, on the contrary, they are very clearly positive at the end of the second section. At the end of the first section the instability and impermanency, that have been implicit but unacknowledged in their love relationship, come to the fore, and the relationship appears destroyed by the pressures of the society that will not sanction it. The couple are left separated from each other and from their son. At the end of the second section, by contrast, the uncertainties of the relationship are eradicated, as the relationship is able to establish itself in accordance with the demands of society. The couple are henceforth permanently united and reunited also with their son.

The importance of the son in the narrative exists, thus, not only in terms of the development of his own relationship with his parents, but also in terms of the impact that he has on the development of the relationship between his parents. Most of the lai is focused upon the lovers' relationship; the son appearing only in the two episodes which lead to a radical change in the relationship between Milun and the lady, first from partial fulfilment to absolute non-fulfilment, and second from partial fulfilment to absolute fulfilment.

Here, as in other lais, Marie has created a narrative structure that is composed of a pattern of parallels within which there is a pattern of reversals. This structure reinforces the felicity of the final situation through its appearing as a contrast with the unhappy situation at the end of the first section; the severance of relations between the lovers, and between the parents and child, the conflict between personal desires and social demands, that characterised the situation at the end of the first section, have, by the end, all been reconciled. Thus is the significance of the final situation enhanced, the preciousness of social and personal fulfilment through marriage and through family emphasised.

#### CHAITIVEL

Social integration is not an issue in this lai, although the action is set very specifically within the context of chivalric society and is, more than in most lais, dependent upon the exercise of chivalric skills. The focus of the text is, nonetheless, entirely centred on fulfilment in love, as aspired to if not achieved. The performance of knightly exploits are subsumed to this, not as an end in

themselves but as a means of achieving fulfilment in love.

### I Initial Situation

Lack of fulfilment in love for the lady and suitors; they offer their love, she withholds hers (9-70).

### II The Tournament

The suitors try to win fulfilment in love by means of demonstrating their prowess in the tournament (71-126).

### III Final Situation

Lack of fulfilment in love for the lady and the suitors, with three of the suitors dead, the fourth invalided. Despite the lady having come to appreciate her suitors, none of them can now offer her his love (127-230).

At one level the lai can be seen to be static; just as there is no fulfilment in love for the lady and her suitors at the beginning of the lai so there is none at the end. The essential difference is that at the beginning there existed still the potential for fulfilment in love, while at the end there is none. The suitors, who were fit and hopeful of happiness in love, are now dead or impotent; the hope of such fulfilment is completely gone.

Ironically it is in their attempts to fulfil their aspirations, that suitors have lost all chance of doing so. In this, the lai is clearly related both to Equitan and to Deus Amanz: the very striving depriving the lovers of the chance of success. In each case, however different the circumstances, the desire for fulfilment in love and the efforts exerted in attaining it lead to the death of

the lovers. Thus three times in Marie's collection of *lais* we find the same structural pattern of the final situation representing a reversal of the situation hoped and striven for by the lovers. In each of the *lais* the pattern serves to highlight different ways in which lovers can be condemned to non-fulfilment in love. In Equitan the fault is that of both of the lovers in their unrestricted lust. Their deaths appear as the assertion of justice against them, their love being unworthy of fulfilment by the fact of its very nature. In Deus Amanz, the love of the young couple is worthy of the fulfilment aspired, but the chance of it is lost by the hubris of the young man. In Chaitivel, the fault is less with the knights who die in their efforts to win the lady's love than with the lady herself. Their fault is in submitting to her will and in risking their lives for the sake of such love as she might offer. The lady's fault lies in her failure to appreciate the value of love in emotional terms and her attempts to evaluate the worthiness of her suitors by purely rational criteria. This implies a failure to appreciate that love should be a balance of reason and passion. The *lai* appears, then, as a critique of the lady as *dompna*, and through her of the principles of courtly love. This is highlighted by Marie's exploitation of this particular structural pattern. Although in each case of Marie's using this structure, the specific fault of the lovers that is focused upon through it is different, it is always in some way a fault of demesure: the lust of Equitan and his mistress; the hubris of the boy in Deus Amanz; the lack of balance in the lady's perception of love, and the excessiveness of the self-sacrifice for the sake of love by her suitors in Chaitivel.

INTEGRATION  
(FULFILMENT)

ISOLATION  
(NON-FULFILMENT)

I Initial sit.

II the tournament

III Final sit.

The suitors in their hopes and  
striving for fulfilment in love ———



CHIEVREFOIL

The story line Chievrefoil is very simple, almost anecdotal: a snatched meeting by the lovers, between two periods of extreme physical separation. It highlights the importance that fulfilment in their love for each other has for them, a love that can exist only in defiance of and in concealment from society.

I Initial Situation

The lovers are separated; Tristan in his native South Wales, Yseut at her husband's court in Cornwall (15-26).

II The meeting of the lovers in the forest (27-101).

III Final Situation

The lovers are separated; Tristan has returned to South Wales, Yseut has rejoined her husband's court (102-06).

The brief moment of the reunion enjoyed by the lovers has no dynamic impact upon their existence in terms of either their personal or their social situation. Both Yseut and Tristan return precisely to the position they occupy initially, in the same society that they have left for the sake of this encounter. Thus, although the actual societies to which they belong at this time are different, there is

an equivalence in the experience of the two lovers, a degree of sharing not only in the moment of their tryst. Thus we find exactly the same narrative pattern described whether it is based on Tristan's experiences or on those of Yseut, as can be seen from the two schemas below: -

Tristan in society  
(in South Wales)  
apart from Yseut

→ T isolates himself from  
society to go into the thick  
of the forest

↓  
encounter with Y: fulfilment  
in love

← Tristan in society  
(in South Wales)  
apart from Yseut

- - - - -

Yseut in society  
(with court retinue)  
apart from Tristan

→ Y isolates herself from  
society to go into the thick  
of the forest

↓  
encounter with T: fulfilment  
in love

← Yseut in society  
(with court retinue)  
apart from Tristan

The direct parallels between the experiences of the two lovers separately as well as together underline their compatibility, as two parts of an entity, their essential union transcending physical separation.

The two schemas also very clearly indicate the opposition between love and society that is fundamental to the experiences of the couple as well as defining the articulations in the narrative structure. When the lovers are integrated in society, whether in

South Wales or in Cornwall, they are deprived of fulfilment in love, which can only be attained when they have isolated themselves from society, both in its physical sense (in contrast to the wilderness of the forest where they meet) and in its sense as a form of authority in opposition to love (as represented by Mark and his court).

### ELIDUC

The narrative structure of Eliduc is to a large extent determined by the geographic displacement of Eliduc between Brittany and England, articulated by changes in Eliduc's social and personal relationships. Unlike in a number of the other lais, there is not a direct opposition between the demands made upon him by society and the desires he has for fulfilment in love. The relationship between the two - feudal obligations and love - is somewhat more complex as a result of the duplication that is a major feature of the lai: there are two kings whom Eliduc serves, two ladies whom he loves<sup>14</sup>. Inevitably from this, there are situations that appear as parallels to other situations or as reversals, fully exploited to create a coherent and tightly composed narrative.

#### I Initial Situation

At the very beginning of the lai Eliduc is fulfilled in both personal and social terms. He is in his own country, active in the service of the King, who in turn appreciates him, popular as a lord over his own men. He is also happily married, a stable and socially desirable marriage (5-12; 29-40).

Thus, unusually, we begin with the model situation of a total

balance between social and personal forms of fulfilment, the situation that is aspired to as a resolution in many of the other lais.

## II 1. Isolation

i) The breakdown of the lord-vassal relationship between Eliduc and the King of Brittany, as a result of the King's believing the slanders of losengiers against Eliduc (41-52).

ii) The consequences of this rupture of feudal relations are extreme. Eliduc is forced into exile from Brittany, to abandon his role within that society in the service of the King of Brittany and all social and personal relationships that he has enjoyed. This represents a complete reversal of the initial situation (51-88).

## II 2. Partial Fulfilment: Eliduc in Exeter

Eliduc goes to Britain. This period represents continued isolation from those relationships that were the basis for his initial situation of personal and social fulfilment.

In compensation for the loss of these he is able to establish an existence that in many ways parallels that has been lost, through his social and personal relationships with the King of Exeter and with Guilliadun (89-549).

## II 3. Re-establishment of Lord-Vassal Relationship

i) The King of Brittany recalls Eliduc to Brittany, thereby reaffirming the feudal relationship that existed at the beginning of the lai (550-640).



ii) The consequences are a reversal of those brought about by the collapse of this feudal relationship. Eliduc returns to Brittany, to the service of the King of Brittany, to his people and his wife.

This is not, however, a full circle, for, despite his reintegration into the society he had left, this is also a severance of the social and personal relationships bonded in Exeter.

Thus the return to Brittany appears to Eliduc in both positive and negative terms (641-758). There is, above all, the opposition between Eliduc's social fulfilment, in the service of the King of Brittany, and his personal non-fulfilment, separated from Guilliadun, the woman he loves.

#### II 4. Eliduc returns to Exeter to fetch Guilliadun (759-808).

#### II 5. Eliduc's Return to Brittany

i) Eliduc takes Guilliadun to Brittany, a journey undertaken for the sake of fulfilment in love, culminating in Guilliadun's swooning (809-68).

ii) The consequences of the journey are the reverse of the intended outcome. Guilliadun lies in a death-like swoon in the hermitage. Thus, as at the time of his previous return to Brittany, Eliduc suffers from non-fulfilment in love. There is, however, the difference that he now also fails to fulfil his social role<sup>15</sup>.

#### II. 5. The Marriage of Eliduc and Guilliadun

By Guildeluëc's withdrawal to a convent, Eliduc and Guilliadun are able to marry (1105-50).

This marriage allows Eliduc to be restored to the degree of personal and social fulfilment he enjoyed initially. Thus, in a sense the narrative structure has described a full circle, although with the crucial difference that Eliduc's marriage is now with Guilliadun rather than with Guildeluëc.

The marriage represents not only a fusion of social and personal fulfilment, but also a bringing together of the two aspects of his life that have appeared to be in geographical opposition, the love he has enjoyed with Guilliadun in Exeter is integrated into his rightful social existence in Brittany.

### III Final Situation

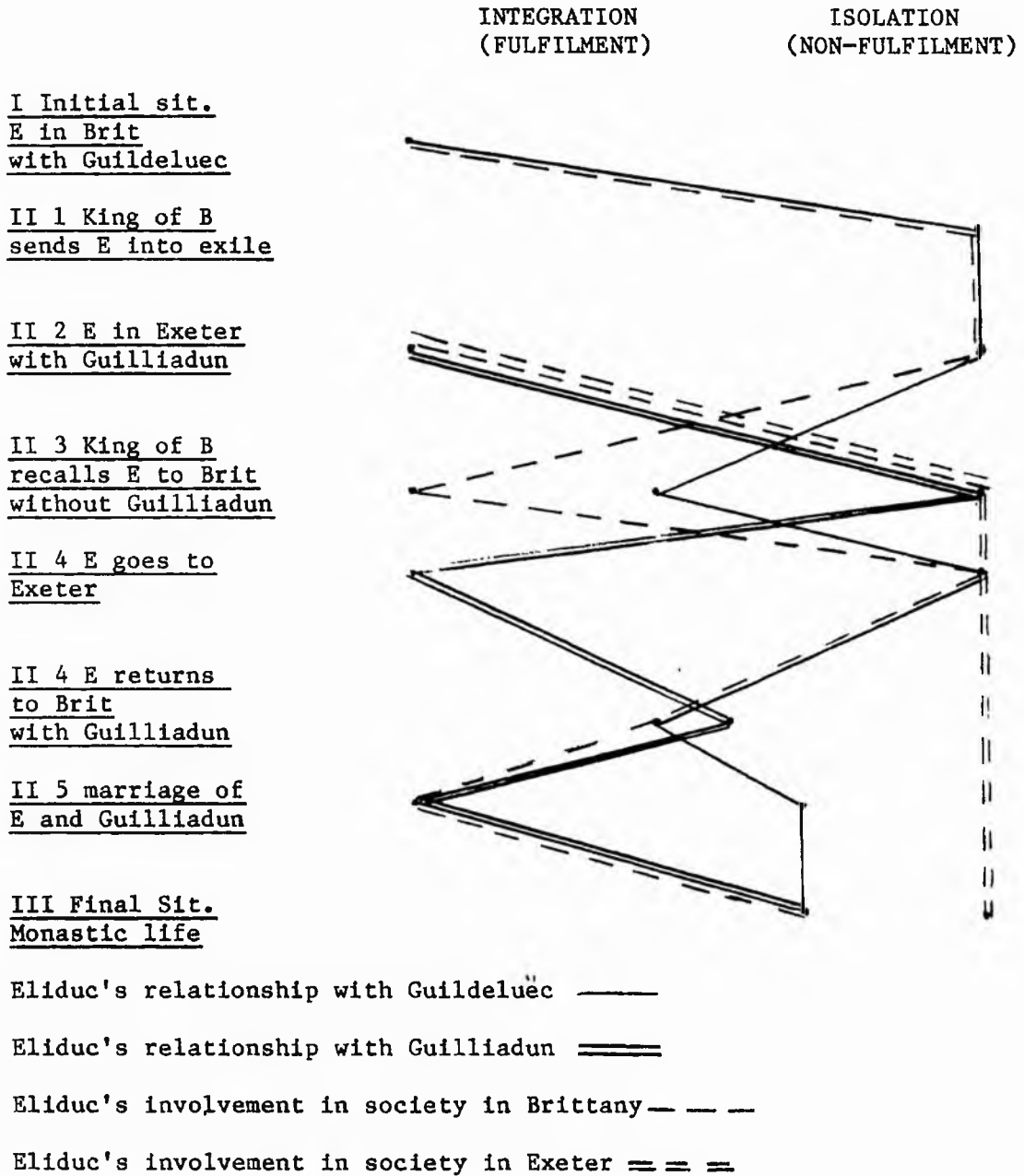
Eliduc and Guilliadun withdraw to a monastic existence, their love for God transcending their enjoyment of personal and social fulfilment achieved through marriage<sup>16</sup> (1151-80).

The terms in which the withdrawal to a life of devotion is presented do not suggest a negation of those other relationships, the bond of love remaining between the three main characters, Eliduc, Guilliadun and Guildeluëc. Nonetheless, in finishing the lai on this religious note, Marie emphasises the importance of the individual's relationship with God above all other relationships.

As in Guigemar, Marie has used the motif of repeated sea journeys to structure her story, although very obviously in a way that is far more complex because of the duality of feudal and love relationships. It is the interaction between these four relationships, each centred upon Eliduc, that creates the tensions in the narrative, before the final balance is achieved between

social fulfilment and personal fulfilment, and between the world of Exeter and the world of Brittany.

The patterns of interaction between these relationships woven through the narrative are indicated in the following diagram: -



The narrative structure of the lai can clearly be read in terms of a series of parallels and reversals. The importance of these emerges from direct comparison of the different episodes, separated from

each other by Eliduc's sea journeys.

II 1 i	collapse of relationship between E and King of B	X	II 3 i	restitution of relationship between E and King of B
	King of B takes initiative	//		King of B takes initiative
	↓			↓
II 1 ii	<u>Consequences:</u>		II 3 ii	<u>Consequences:</u>
	physical isolation from B	X		return to B
	physical isolation from feudal relationships	X		return to feudal relationships.
	physical isolation from wife	X		return to wife

In this way the second episode appears as a reversal of the first,  
but: -

II 1 ii	physical isolation from a society in which E has been active (Brittany)	//	II 3 ii	physical isolation from a society in which E has been active (Exeter)
	severance of feudal relationship (King of B)	//		severance of feudal relationship (King of E)
	isolation from the woman E loves (Guilideluec)	//		isolation from the woman E loves (Guilliadun)

From this the duality of Eliduc's feudal and personal relationships is made manifest. There is an evident opposition between those relationships that he has established in Exeter and those to which he returns in Brittany, an opposition that is kept distinct between the expanse of sea between the two pairs of relationships, but which is experienced within Eliduc as a conflict, as the bond of relationships transcends physical separation.

This emerges further from a comparison of Eliduc's initial existence in Brittany, before his exile, and his existence there after his return: -

I	E in Brittany	//	II 3 ii	E in Brittany
	E active in service of King of B	//		E active in service of King of B
	E popular with friends and vassals	//		E popular with friends and vassals
	E loved by wife	//		E loved by wife
	E fulfilled in social terms	//		E fulfilled in social terms
	E personally fulfilled	X		E not personally fulfilled

The crucial difference appears in Eliduc's attitude; after his return to Brittany Eliduc can no longer find the satisfaction of happiness that he has previously enjoyed in this existence which is in terms of social context and social relationship identical. Whereas previously this existence represented a balance between social and personal fulfilment, now there is an imbalance.

Thus we see that situations in the lai that appear in physical (geographical) terms to be parallels are, at the significant level of Eliduc's experience within them, reversals. This can be seen very clearly from the contrasts that emerge from Eliduc's two journeys from Brittany, the first made when Eliduc has been sent into exile, the second when he returns to fetch Guilliadun. Physically it is the same crossing, in the same direction, but in terms of their significance for Eliduc they are in complete contrast: -

II 1 ii	E goes from B. to Exeter	//	II 4	E goes from B to Exeter
	E forced to leave against his will	X		E chooses to leave willingly
	E has no specific destination	X		E is going specifically to Exeter
	E with no specific purpose only vaguely for social fulfilment	X		E with specific purpose - fulfilment in love

The same pattern of parallels and reversals is to be found linking the reverse crossings that Eliduc makes, from Exeter to Brittany, the first after his recall by the King of Brittany, and second after fetching Guilliadun.

II 3 ii E goes from Exeter to Brittany		II 5 E goes from Exeter to Brittany
E is alone	X	E is with Guilliadun
E is leaving behind the fulfilment in love he has enjoyed with Guilliadun	X	E has the hope of enjoying the fulfilment in love with Guilliadun which he has lacked

The one is thus experienced by Eliduc as a loss of fulfilment in love, the other as leading towards fulfilment in that love.

It is also of interest to compare Eliduc's experience once he has returned to Brittany after these two crossings, both in terms of his personal fulfilment and of his social fulfilment: -

II 3 ii E in Brittany		II 5 E in Brittany
E loved by his wife		E loved by his wife
E loved by friends and vassals		E loved by friends and vassals
E actively partici- pates in society	X	E does not participate in society
E physically separ- ated from the woman he loves	X	E visits the woman he loved daily
E suffering loss of fulfilment in love		E suffering loss of fulfilment in love
E with hope of re- gaining fulfilment in love	X	E with no hope of re- gaining fulfilment in love

The essential difference in Eliduc's experiences in these two episodes lies in the change in Eliduc's perception of his loss of fulfilment in love. Neither after his first return to Brittany nor

after his second return is he able to enjoy fulfilment in his love for Guilliadun. The obstacle in the first instance to such non-fulfilment is the physical distance between the lovers, Guilliadun being in Exeter. This appears as a surmountable obstacle, allowing Eliduc to hope for and to anticipate that he will in the future be reunited with his mistress in love and happiness. In the later episode, the obstacle of physical distance has been removed; the obstacle now to Eliduc's enjoyment of fulfilment in love is the fact of Guilliadun's death-like trance that appears to have deprived him of her love forever. Whereas the earlier period of non-fulfilment appeared temporary, the latter appears permanent and allowing for no hope of future happiness. It is this despair that prevents Eliduc from achieving any form of social fulfilment; in this there is the other essential contrast between the two episodes. On the first occasion of his return to Brittany his lack of fulfilment in love exists aside from his fulfilment in society, there is, we have seen, an imbalance between the two aspects of Eliduc's life. At the time after Eliduc's second return there is a negative fusion of the two as Eliduc enjoys neither fulfilment in love nor in society.

Thus it becomes evident that the patterns of interaction between social fulfilment/non-fulfilment and personal fulfilment/non-fulfilment are not static, but move from an initial balance to a final balance through various stages of opposition and fusion. These are interwoven through the basic structure of the narrative, defined by Eliduc's movements between Brittany and Exeter, in such a way that the differences that exist between superficially similar episodes are highlighted. This can be seen if we consider the significance of each of the key episodes of the lai in terms of

personal fulfilment, social fulfilment and geographical context: -

I Initial Situation: Eliduc in Brittany

in his native country

social fulfilment

personal fulfilment

II 2: Eliduc in Exeter

in exile

social fulfilment

personal fulfilment

II 3 ii: Eliduc in Brittany

in his native country

social fulfilment

personal non-fulfilment

II 4: Eliduc in Brittany

in his native country

social non-fulfilment

personal non-fulfilment

II 5: Marriage of Eliduc and Guilliadun: Eliduc in Brittany

in his native country

social fulfilment

personal fulfilment

The final situation offered through the marriage of Eliduc and Guilliadun appears, then, as the re-affirmation of the stability and balance that existed initially, and which is only possible if Eliduc



is in his native country and if his love relationship is integrated into society. The significance of this appears through the contrast presented through the intermediary episodes, which, each in a different way, are states of imbalance and instability.

### IGNAURE

Chivalric society appears in the lai of Ignaure only in terms of providing a setting for the actions; the focus of the narrative is entirely directed at the love relationships between Ignaure and his twelve mistresses, the articulations in the structure based on the developments in these relationships.

The lai falls naturally into two sections, the second in many ways paralleling the first, except in the tragic ending which is averted at the end of the first section but appears as the denouement of the lai as a whole.

#### Initial Situation: Fulfilment in Love

Initially Ignaure is very happy in the love relationships he enjoys with his twelve mistresses. The mistresses are happy also, although their perception of the nature of the relationships with Ignaure is faulty, based on ignorance of the truth of the situation, each believing herself to be Ignaure's only mistress (19-65).

#### II 1. Loss of Fulfilment in Love

i) The mistresses discover the truth of their relationships with Ignaure in the course of their 'confessional' game (66-211).

ii) The mistresses as a result of their discovery vow never to love

Ignauere again and to kill him (212-43). The ladies are partly justified in their anger against Ignauere by the demesure of Ignauere's behaviour.

The loss of the ladies' love is not directly the result of his having twelve mistresses. It is the essential middle stage of the discovery by the ladies of the situation that prompts their turning against him. This three stage pattern - situation → knowledge → decision/situation - is one repeated throughout the lai, providing the narrative with the basis of its structure. The dynamic force that propels the story forward, articulating its progress from one situation to another is the discovery of the truth.

iii) The ladies confront Ignauere with their discovery of the truth and tell him they will no longer love him. He succeeds in persuading them not to kill him (244-365).

There is specifically a lapse of time between the initial decision by the ladies no longer to love Ignauere, and his discovery of their withdrawal of their love. We are told: -

Ignaures, ki cel engien ne sot,  
Ignaure 226.

Just as he has deceived them, so they deceive him into assuming he is still loved and thereby he is lured into the confrontation with them in the garden (226-71). Here again, then, there is a clear dichotomy between reality and what is believed to be reality.

## II 2. Partial Fulfilment in Love

i) Deprived of the relationships he has enjoyed with eleven of his mistresses, Ignauere is, nonetheless, not totally deprived of fulfilment in love, continuing to derive much happiness from the

relationship with his one remaining mistress (366-70).

ii) The ladies' husbands discover the truth of their wives' unfaithfulness (371-424).

iii) In their anger the husbands decide to deprive Ignaure of any further fulfilment in love and to kill him (425-67).

In their expression of anger against Ignaure, there are obvious echoes of their wives' anger against him when they initially discovered his unfaithfulness to them.

It is ironic that by the time the husbands make this discovery, eleven of the relationships have already come to an end. This emphasises the fact that it is not the situation in itself that is crucial to the development of the story, but the discovery of the truth. There is the likelihood that the original twelve relationships could have continued to bring the lovers much happiness without the husbands ever discovering the truth about them. This is indicated by the fact that it is only through overhearing the ladies in their own discovering of the truth (in the 'confessional' game) that the losengier also learns of it before passing it on to the husbands.

Here, again we see how the development of the narrative is based on the pattern of situation → discovery → decision.

iv) The husbands capture and kill Ignaure (486-517).

Just as Ignaure was not entirely an innocent victim when the ladies

turned their anger against him, so, here also, he is partly to blame for his own unhappy plight, and through the same fault: his démésure.

We note also the slight lapse of time between the husbands making the decision to kill Ignaure and his discovery of this intention against him (468-91).

### II 3. Complete Loss of Fulfilment in Love

i) The ladies after Ignaure has been taken away and killed are left in a period of ignorance over his fate. This is particularly focused upon; his last mistress says: -

'ne sai s'il est u mors u vis'

Ignaure 522

It is also specifically because of their ignorance that the women go on a hunger strike, refusing to eat until they know the truth about Ignaure (518-31). It is because they do not know the truth that they eat Ignaure's heart that has been served to them by their husbands.

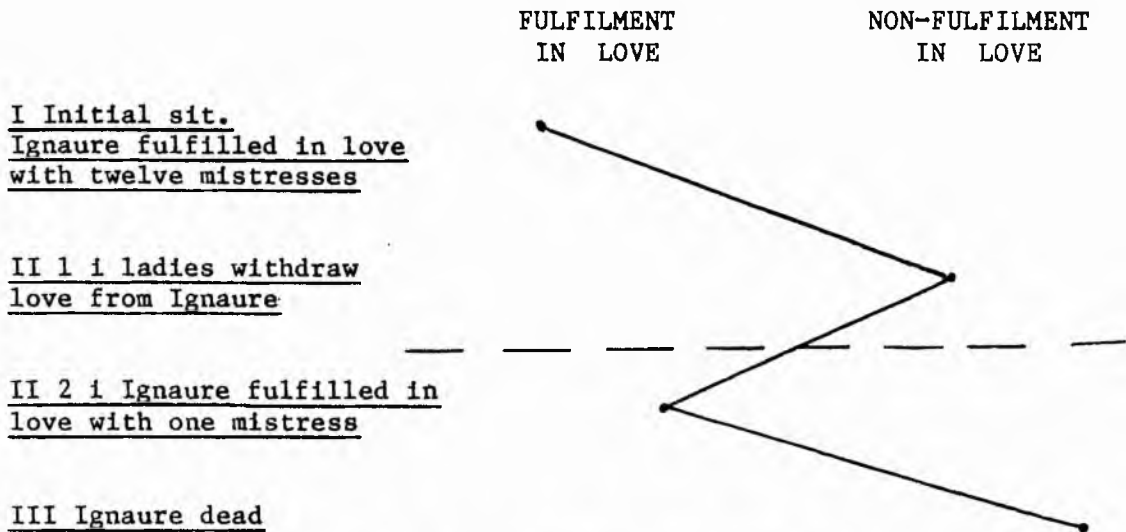
ii) Discovering the truth of what they have eaten and, therefore, of Ignaure's death, the ladies determine never to eat again (532-610).

### III Final Situation

This is a complete reversal of the initial situation, all the happiness in love that was enjoyed by Ignaure and his mistresses has now been irretrievably lost (611-20).

Thus we see how the lai traces the passage of Ignaure from fulfilment in love to non-fulfilment in love. This is the story of the lai as a whole, also of each of the two sections of

which it is composed, as can be seen from the following diagram: -

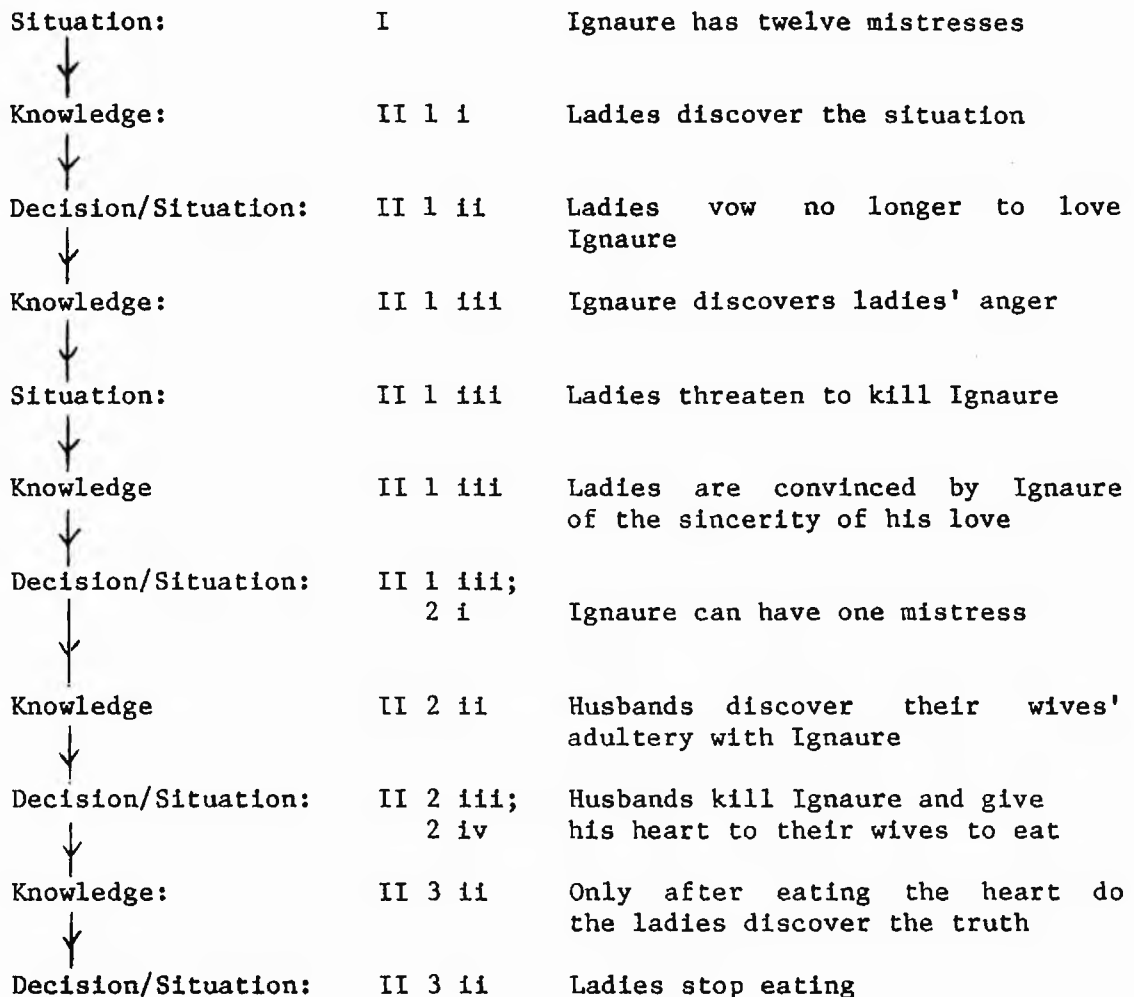


The initial and final situation are the polarities; the first severance of the relationship between Ignare and the ladies is not as extreme as that at the end of the lai because Ignare is allowed a reprieve. The degree of fulfilment in love that he enjoys subsequently is, however, not as great as that initially enjoyed because he has only one mistress rather than twelve.

A more specific comparison of the two sections reveals the extent to which they exist as parallels in their details as well as in their broad outlines.

<u>Situation:</u>	I	Ig fulfilled in love	II 2 i	Ig fulfilled in love
		↓		↓
<u>Discovery:</u>	II 1 i	Discovery by ladies of the situation	II 2 ii	Discovery by husbands of the situation
		↓		↓
<u>Reaction/ Decision</u>	II 1 ii	Decision to kill Ig as vengeance	II 2 iii	Decision to kill Ig as vengeance
		↓		↓
<u>Means</u>	II 1 iii	Ig trapped by cunning (lured into garden by ladies)	II 2 iv	Ignare trapped by cunning (use of secret passage by husbands)
		↓		↓
<u>Outcome</u>		Ig reprieved		Ig killed

We see clearly how both sections are structured on the basis of the pattern of situation → discovery → decision/new situation. The extent to which this pattern is exploited to underline every twist in the narrative can, however, only be fully appreciated from looking at the story chronologically: -



Thus we see how each situation is related to the previous one through the motif of discovery; each twist in the story taking Ignare and the twelve ladies a step further from the degree of fulfilment in love enjoyed by them initially to their tragic end.

## HAVELOC

Although the story includes a dimension of personal fulfilment in the relation between Haveloc and Argentille, the essential thrust of the story is concerned with tracing the life of Haveloc from his birth, through various stages of social isolation, to his eventual reclaiming his birthright and thereby achieving the degree of absolute social fulfilment that is rightfully his. Interwoven with Haveloc's experiences are those of Argentille. For her too there is the pattern through the narrative of integration → isolation → integration as she loses and seeks to regain her rightful position in society. The two strands through the narrative, corresponding to the experiences of these two main characters, ultimately fuse. However, although sharing many of the same experiences, the progress made by Argentille and Haveloc is not uniformly at the same pace. Those aspects of the narrative that are peculiar in significance to only Argentille and are therefore distinguished from the main development of the narrative centring on Haveloc by square brackets.

### I Initial Situation

Haveloc born in Denmark, the son and rightful heir of King Gunter. It is the circumstances of his birth that determine that role in society that will rightfully be his to fulfil as an adult (24-26).

### II 1 Isolation

The initial stage of Haveloc's social integration is very short-lived. The circumstances that deprive him of this affect him when he is still a baby; there is, however, a development in these, each stage taking him further into social isolation and displacement.

i) Haveloc's father is killed (27-36). This represents the first break with Haveloc's rightful identity and role in society.

ii) Odulf claims the throne of Denmark, to which Haveloc is the legitimate heir, further distancing Haveloc from his natural social status (37-50).

iii) Haveloc leaves Denmark, taken on the ship by Grim. This exile from his native country imposed upon him by circumstances, is a further stage in his social displacement (51-109).

It has, however, a positive significance, as the necessary means for saving Haveloc's life and of thereby allowing him to regain his throne in the future.

iv) Haveloc's mother is killed by pirates during the crossing from Denmark. This is the final severance of the direct bond between Haveloc and his family identity (110-22).

v) Haveloc grows up in Grimsby (123-66).

This is the point of his most extreme social isolation, separated from his own country, his own family and people; living in a fishing community at the opposite end of the social scale from the royal court that would be his natural environment.

His isolation is not only material and physical, but also at the essential level of knowledge. He is ignorant of his natural family and social identity, and even of the most basic fact of his identity, his own name, which is changed from Haveloc to Cuaran



(149-50). Without knowledge of his identity in these terms Haveloc has no knowledge of the role in society that is rightfully his, and lacking such knowledge he can have no chance of fulfilling that role.

Yet, although in immediate terms the circumstances of Haveloc's situation are unequivocally negative, there is within them a positive intention. Such concealment of Haveloc's identity is to keep his life safe and therefore to ensure that he has a chance of reclaiming his crown.

## II 2. Reintegration

As with Haveloc's movement into social isolation, the steps towards his ultimate social fulfilment are gradual, leading him away from the point of extreme social displacement of his upbringing in Grimsby.

1) Haveloc goes to the royal court at Lincoln (166-288). He remains under the misapprehension as to his true identity and participates in the life of the court only at the basest level as a scullion. This represents, nonetheless, the first positive step towards his full social reintegration, providing him with contact with a noble society. This is specifically Grim's intention (175-76).

[Argentille as the rightful Queen at the court of Lincoln is deprived of these rights of sovereignty in a way that is very similar to Haveloc's experience.

Firstly she is orphaned.

Then she is effectively prevented from fulfilling her role in society by Edelsi as her regent (195-42).]

ii) The marriage between Haveloc and Argentille (284-400). This is an ideal marriage in social terms for both Argentille and Haveloc.

It is immediately obvious that it represents a further positive step for Haveloc towards his social fulfilment.

[For Argentille the significance is more complex. Superficially it is wholly negative, deliberately contracted by Edelsi to deprive Argentille of her rights as Queen (381-84).

Ultimately, however, this marriage proves to be a vital step towards her achieving the social fulfilment that is rightfully hers, as it is Haveloc who will enable her to reclaim her crown.]

Although the emphasis on the marriage is primarily in terms of its social significance, it is also important in providing the couple with a degree of personal fulfilment in love that has previously been lacking from their lives.

iii) Argentille's dream (401-90).

This provides the initial impetus towards Haveloc's discovery of his own identity. It represents, therefore, a positive step towards fulfilment for both Haveloc and Argentille.

iv) Argentille's visit to the hermit (491-538)

From the hermit's interpretation of Argentille's dream, Argentille and Haveloc learn that he is of royal birth, the first positive indication of the role in society that he should fulfil.

v) Haveloc goes to Grimsby and discovers from Grim's daughter Kelloc

the truth of his identity as the rightful king of Denmark, it is with this knowledge that he can seek to reclaim his throne (539-640).

[For Argentille this departure from Lincoln is of dual significance. In a negative sense it represents exile from her own country, and a relinquishment of her position within that country.

It is, nonetheless, motivated by the hope that this step will lead ultimately to her reclaiming her own throne (548-52), and in this sense it is a positive development.]

iv) Haveloc goes to Denmark (641-46). This is his return from exile. [This is a further stage in Argentille's self-exile, but again essentially a positive step.]

vii) Haveloc reclaims his throne, killing the usurper Odulf. He is a popular and effective king, successfully fulfilling the role in society to which he has been destined from birth (647-983).

There is a fusion of social and personal fulfilment in this, with much happiness derived from his marriage to Argentille (977-78).

[For Argentille, also, this represents social fulfilment, accepted as Queen of Denmark, but whereas for Haveloc this throne represents his birthright, Argentille remains deprived of her birthright, the throne of Lincoln.]

viii) The throne of Lincoln is won back from Edelsi, the final stage for Haveloc and, in particular, for Argentille in their progress towards the fulfilment of their destiny in society (984-1098).

### III Final Situation

Absolute fulfilment in both social and personal terms for Argentille and Haveloc, established as king and queen not only over their own lands, but also over Edelsi's lands, inherited by Argentille after Edelsi's death (1099-1108).

Thus the end of the lai is supremely positive, with justice fully asserted to compensate for the injustice that has been suffered by both Haveloc and Argentille.

The two dynamic forces within the lai, that enable the two protagonists to achieve this final state of consummate fulfilment, appear in the relationship between Grim and Haveloc and in the marriage between Haveloc and Argentille. It is as a result of Grim's efforts that Haveloc's life is saved as a child and that he is reintroduced to royal society by being sent to the court at Lincoln. It is also from Grim's daughter that Haveloc learns of his true identity as the King of Denmark, and is thereby prompted to reclaim his throne. The benefits of his marriage to Argentille are for Haveloc not only in its intrinsic virtues, but also in the specific role that Argentille plays in enabling him to reclaim his sovereign rights, it is her dream on their wedding night and her visit to the hermit that provide Haveloc with the impetus towards discovering and fulfilling his royal identity. Argentille is also dependent upon the marriage for her own social fulfilment, her throne in Lincoln reclaimed for her by her husband.

There is an irony in the dual significance of these two relationships in their impact on the lives of the two protagonists. Grim's intervention in Haveloc's life, although ultimately leading,

we see to his fulfilment in society, has also been the direct cause of Haveloc's extreme social isolation in childhood. Equally, the marriage to Haveloc, although leading ultimately to her regaining her rights in society, has initially appeared to be a negation of those rights.

There is, then, in both of these relationships a contradiction between the apparent significance and the true significance of the role that they play in the lives of the protagonists - apparently depriving them of the chance of social fulfilment, in fact providing the key to it.

This dual function of the relationships emerges clearly from a diagram relating to the structure of the lai. From it we can see the extent to which every incident and episode in the story has a specific significance in terms of the social fulfilment/non-fulfilment of Haveloc and Argentille: -

INTEGRATION  
(FULFILMENT)

ISOLATION  
(NON-FULFILMENT)

I Initial sit.  
birth of H

II 1 i death of Gunter

II 1 ii Odulf usurps  
throne of Denmark

II 1 iii H leaves Denmark

II 1 iv H's mother killed

II 1 v H's childhood in Grimsby

II 2 i H goes to Lincoln  
[death of A's father  
Edelsi usurps her throne]

II 2 ii marriage of H and A

II 2 iii A's dream

II 2 iv A visits hermit

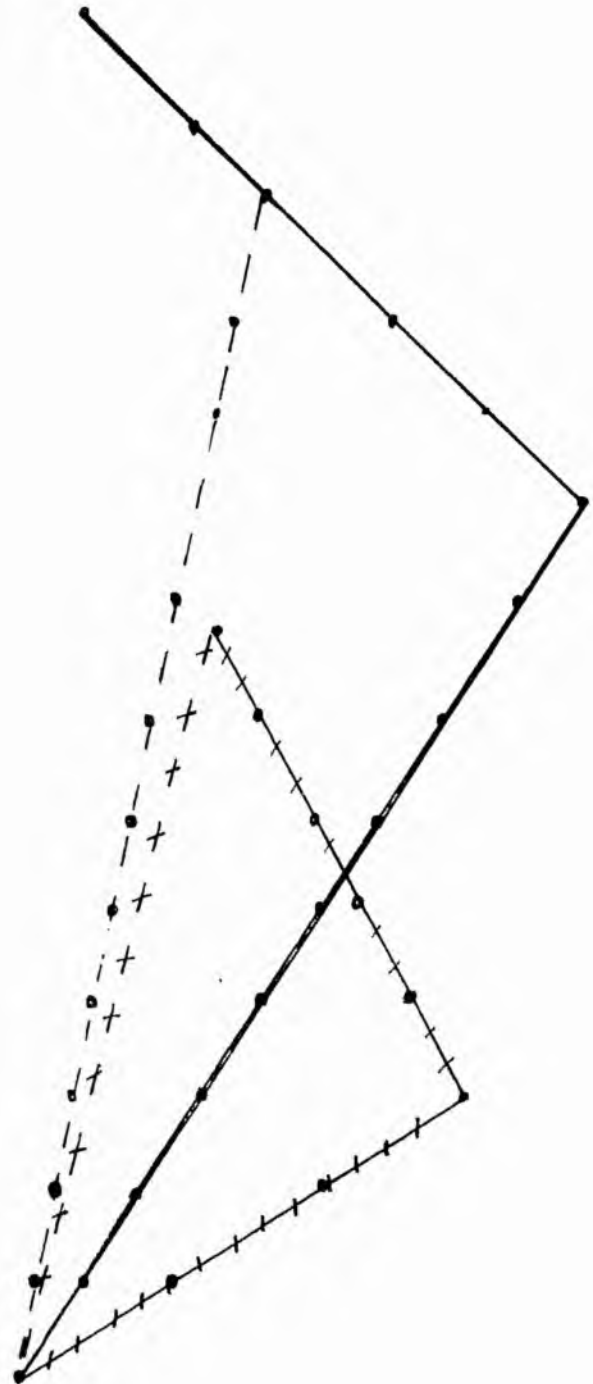
II 2 v H and A go to Grimsby

II 2 vi H and A go to Denmark

II 2 vii H as King of Denmark

II 2 vii throne of Lincoln won

III final sit.



Haveloc ——— ——— ———

Argentille + + + + +

## ARISTOTE

In Aristote the opposition that establishes the tensions in the narrative is less specifically between love and society than in many of the lais, rather it is between love and reason. Alixandre and Aristote are initially presented as polarities, Aristote upholding the principles of reason, Alixandre defending the importance of love. Through the course of the narrative, however, both, independently, are moved from their initial stances. The only figure to be constant in upholding the same values throughout is the young girl, Alixandre's mistress<sup>17</sup>. Through her constancy the overwhelming power of love is asserted, albeit in a lighthearted way<sup>18</sup>.

### I Initial Situation

Alixandre is involved in a love relationship with the young girl, both deriving much pleasure from their love (60-152).

II 1. Aristote persuades Alixandre to renounce his love relationship because of its being contrary to reason (153-273).

II 2. The girl seduces Aristote, thereby demonstrating the invalidity of reason over love (274-470).

### III Final Situation

Alixandre resumes his relationship with the girl.

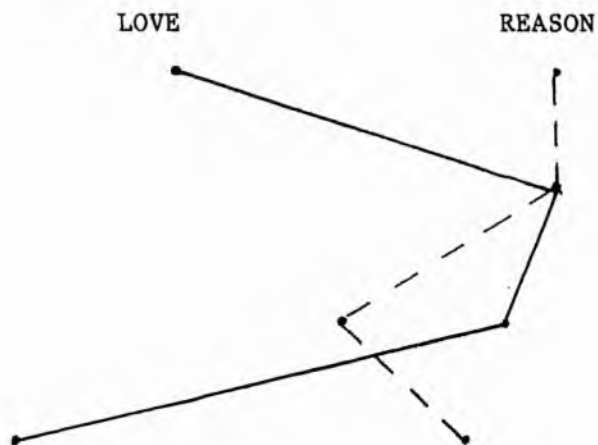
Aristote returns to his pursuit of wisdom (471-511).

This is not wholly a return to the initial situation, as Aristote has been forced to acknowledge the power of love and can never again

be so entrenched in his opposition to love, which has proven the weakness of the power of reason. The stability and strength of Alixandre's relationship with his mistress is, on the other hand, reinforced, he is unlikely to be persuaded again to renounce his fulfilment in love for the sake of Aristote's belief in reason.

The experiences of Alixandre and Aristote, serving as the basis of the narrative structure of the lai, can be seen, therefore, as an illustration of the argument between love and reason, with the power and attractions of love triumphantly asserted over those of reason.

- I Initial sit.  
Al happy in love
- II 1 Ar persuades Al  
to give up love
- II 2 Ar seduced by  
girl
- III Final sit.  
Al happy in love



Alixandre ———  
Aristote - - -

#### OMBRE

The lai concentrates entirely on the knight's striving to achieve fulfilment in love, from the time of his first falling in love with the lady, through to the point of her accepting and reciprocating his love, marking the beginning of a relationship as such between them. Each of the stages in the story is leading towards this consummation of his love, although some appear to do so obliquely. The narrative structure is, thus, a simple linear one.



### I Initial Situation

The knight is socially and personally fulfilled in a general way, presented as a model of courtly chivalry (53-111).

II 1. i) The knight falls in love with the lady (112-211).

ii) The knight goes to the lady's castle (212-289).

iii) He declares his love for her, tries to persuade her to accept it (290-561).

iv) Apparently spurned by her, he puts his ring on her finger (562-79).

II 2. The knight rides away from the lady (580-635).

II 3. The lady sends her messenger to fetch the knight back (636-71).

II 4. i) The knight returns to the lady's castle (672-75).

ii) He is forced by the lady to take the ring back (676-871).

iii) He throws the ring into the well where it is 'received' by the lady's reflection in the water (872-907).

iv) Impressed by this gesture of his love the lady accepts the knight's love (908-41).

### III Final Situation

The knight is fulfilled in a love relationship with the lady (942-51)

The structure of the lai falls naturally into two sections, corresponding to the knight's two visits to the lady. In both his intentions are the same, to secure the lady's love; in both he tries through argument to win her love and when that fails he makes a dramatic gesture of his love, in the first this is by giving her his ring, in second by giving his ring to her reflection. There is, therefore, a clear parallelism between the two sections, both exploiting the motif of the gift of the ring as a token of his love. There is the irony that although an expression of his love, the giving of the ring on both occasions appears to be a renunciation of love. The first time it is given when he has been forced to leave the lady, the second time he throws it in the water because she will not keep it. In this way it appears that he suffers setbacks in his suit. But the gift of the ring in both cases has, in fact, a positive role in the development of the narrative to its happy conclusion: it is because of finding the ring on her finger that the lady asks for the knight to return, and it is because of his throwing the ring in the well that he finally wins her love. It is because of this that the narrative structure of the lai, in reflection of the true significance of the story, can be said to be a straightforwardly linear one tracing the knight's successful pursuit of fulfilment in love, as can be seen in the following diagram: -

FULFILMENT  
IN LOVE

NON-FULFILMENT  
IN LOVE

I Initial sit.  
the knight before love

II 1 i knight falls in love

II 1 ii knight goes to castle

II 1 iii knight declares his  
love

II 1 iv knight puts ring on  
the lady's finger

II 2 knight rides away

II 3 lady finds ring:  
recalls knight

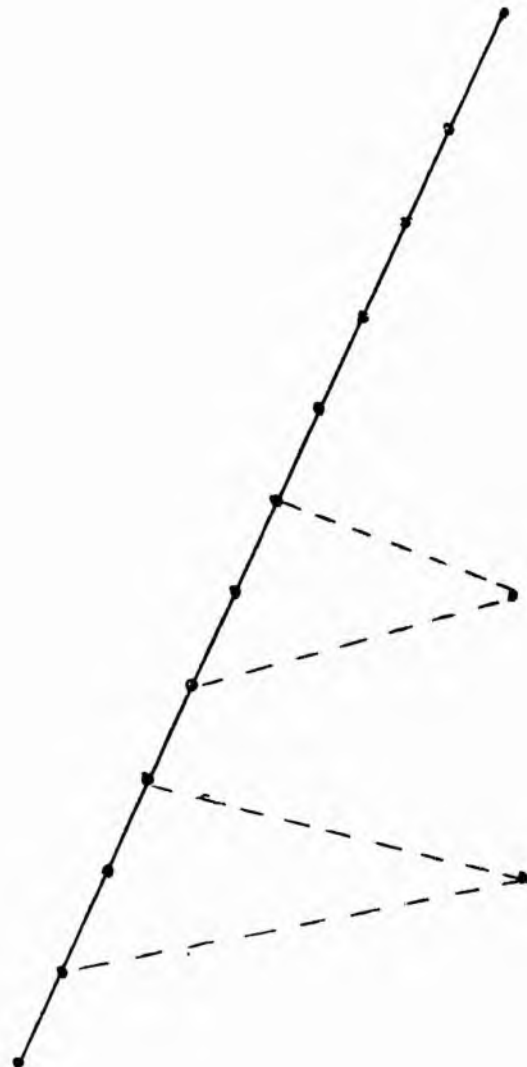
II 4 i knight goes to castle

II 4 ii knight takes ring back

II 4 iii knight throws ring in  
the well

II 4 iv the lady accepts the  
knight's love

III Final sit.  
fulfilment in love



### TROT

Narrative structure as such is of minor importance in this lai, which is primarily and overtly didactic in intent. The narrative framework, such as there is, exists merely as a vehicle for expressing an advocacy of good love and a condemnation of those who may be disdainful of such love.

The structure of the narrative, which is almost coincidental to the

true significance of the lai, derives from the physical displacement of their hero, Lorois.

### I Initial Situation

Lorois as an integrated member of the court (5-24).

II Lorois goes into the forest. Here he meets the two groups of ladies and learns, through their example, of the distinction between good conduct in love and bad conduct in love, the former leading to fulfilment and happiness, the latter to wretchedness (25-291).

### III Final Situation

Lorois has returned to the court (292-304).

In terms of the physical movement through the lai, the structure is clearly circular. However, what is crucial in terms of the significance of the text, is the knowledge that Lorois acquires through his meeting with the ladies. If not materially changed by his experiences in the forest, Lorois when he returns to the court is, nonetheless, altered and richer in terms of his new appreciation of the value of love. Lorois's journey into the forest and out of it again as a man enriched by his insight into love, although an actual, physical journey, can be read almost in symbolic terms, as a parallel of the reader's own experience. The reader enters the process of reading the lai from the basis of his position in the society of the Real World, it is a solitary process cutting him off from active participation in the life of society. In these aspects the process of reading appears identical to Lorois's entry into the forest. When the reader has read the lai, he returns to his normal life in society, not materially changed by his experience of

reading, but, through reading the author's arguments in favour of good love, he has - or so the author patently intends - acquired an appreciation of good conduct in love and of the preciousness of fulfilment in love. This he can use in his own life in society, just as Lorois, returning to the court at the end of the lai, can make use of the same knowledge, offered to him by the lady in the forest, as the basis of his conduct in society.

It is the very simplicity of the narrative structure, with its particular emphasis on the exposition of the quality of good love, that directs the reader not to be distracted by the physical actions of Lorois but to focus rather on the moral significance of the story, Lorois serving as a model to the reader in how to respond to it.

#### VAIR PALEFROI

Although the focus of the lai is primarily on the lovers in their pursuit of fulfilment in love, the structure of the narrative is dependent upon the tensions that exist between them and the two old men - the girl's father and the boy's uncle - and their social ambitions. The contrast between the young lovers and the old men highlights the contrast between love as a positive force and society as a negative force. This appears particularly through the use of the motif of marriage, which has both a social significance and a personal significance. It is marriage that is the goal of both the lovers, who perceive it essentially as a means of realising their personal aspirations for fulfilment in love, and of the old men, who perceive it exclusively as a means of realising their social ambitions. From the beginning of the lai the two perceptions of

marriage are stressed and set in opposition, an opposition that is maintained until it is finally resolved through the marriage achieved at the end of the lai and which is successful both in social terms and in personal terms.

### I Initial Situation

The young couple are in love, but enjoy little fulfilment in their relationship, because of the restrictions imposed upon it by the girl's father. It is for this reason that the lovers aspire to marriage as a means to unrestricted fulfilment in their love (35-244).

II 1 i) Guillaume, the young knight, asks the father for permission to marry the girl (245-307).

ii) The father foils this attempt by the boy towards fulfilment in love, by asserting his parental authority. In refusing to allow the boy to marry his daughter, he asserts his own vision of marriage in social terms (308-48).

II 2. i) Guillaume appeals to his uncle for help in his suit for the girl's hand in marriage (349-505).

ii) The uncle foils this attempt by the boy towards fulfilment in love, by seeking to marry the girl himself, as a means of furthering his social ambitions (506-87).

II 3. i) The two old men arrange the marriage between the uncle and the girl as a match of social and economic convenience, a denial of the value of love. The lovers feel powerless to make further

efforts towards fulfilment in their aspirations and condemned to non-fulfilment in their love (587-1020).

ii) The old men are foiled in their attempts towards fulfilment in their social ambitions, as the girl is carried away from the marriage procession by the white palfrey which carries her to her lover (1021-1240).

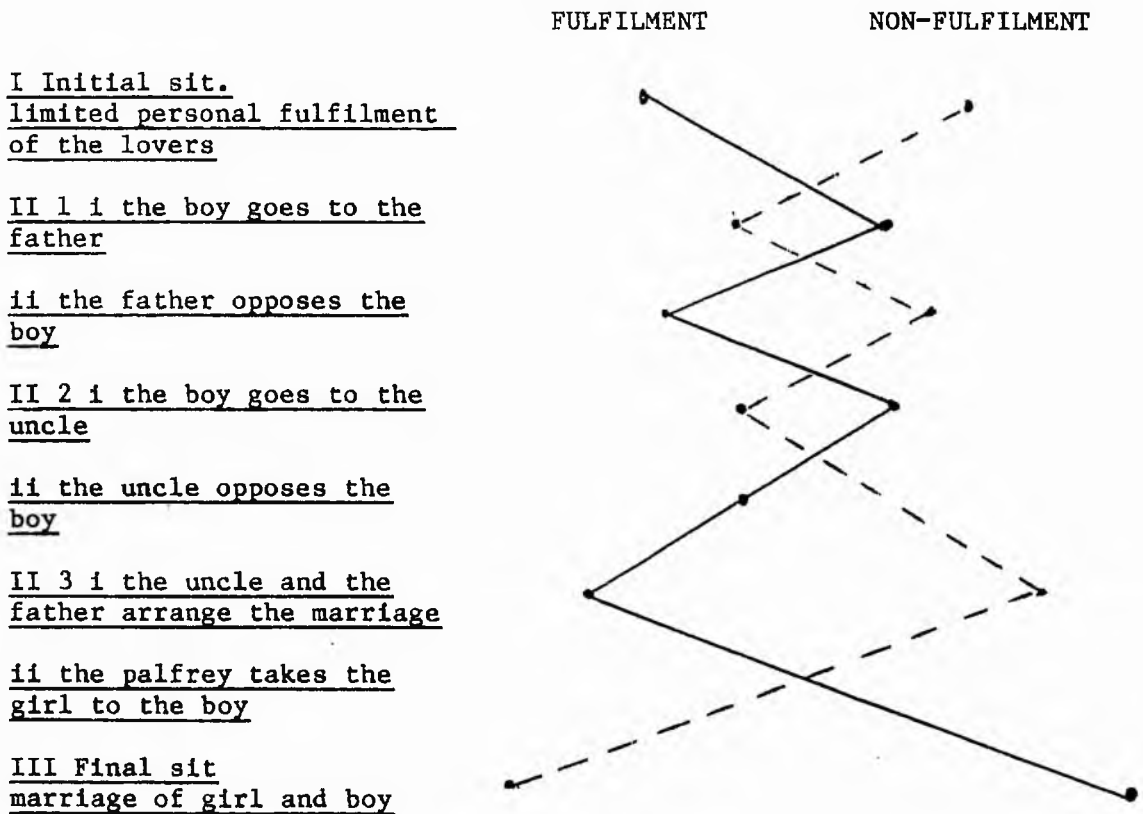
### III Final Situation

The marriage of the lovers, allowing them the absolute fulfilment in love to which they originally aspired. This marriage is also a source of social fulfilment, in the way that the old men had perceived it to be, as the couple inherit the wealth of the old men, which had been the basis of their social ambitions. Thus the marriage represents the perfect reconciliation of social and personal fulfilment, demonstrating that the two aspects are not necessarily set in opposition (1241-1342).

The conflict between the personal desires of the lovers and the social ambitions of the old men serves, very evidently, as the basis of the narrative structure. Between the initial situation and the final situation there are three sections, within each of which there is what can be termed a sea-saw motion. The first two of these sections appear as direct parallels, the lovers seeking to achieve ascendancy through their attempts at securing the marriage they want, but then forced down by the power of the social authority asserted by the old men. The third section offers a reversal of this pattern; it is the old men who appear initially to be moving towards achieving the marriage that they want, and whose attempts are finally thwarted. Thus the final section, allowing for the

triumphant ending of the lai, offers a justice that compensates for the injustice that appears dominant at the end of the other two sections. The exploitation of a series of parallels and reversals through the narrative based on the opposition between love and social ambition serves to enhance the merit and power of a love, that is finally able to overcome the obstacles and achieve absolute fulfilment. Thus the marriage at the end of the lai appears not only as a celebration of the love of the couple as individuals, but also in a wider sense as a celebration of the power of love.

From the following diagram, we see how the two strands of the narrative, based on the social ambitions of the old men and the lovers' aspirations for personal fulfilment, are interwoven, to highlight the opposition between the two: -



Love between the girl and the boy - - - - -

The social ambitions of the old men ————



### LAI DU MANTEL

This lai must be considered more properly as anecdotal than as truly narrative, as there is no true development that can be traced from the initial situation to the final situation.

#### I Initial Situation

The court of King Arthur despite its appearance of splendour is essentially degenerate (6-109). With the exception of Caradoc and his lady.

#### II The Chastity Test of the Mantel.

1. The young man arrives at the court with the mantel which will be given to the lady most loyal to her husband or lover (110-224).
2. The Queen and the other ladies of the court try on the mantel, which fits none of them, proving them all to be unfaithful (225-757).
3. Caradoc's mistress tries on the mantel. It fits her, proving her faithfulness.
4. To reward her for her faithfulness she is given the mantel.

#### III Final Situation

The court continues apparently unchanged, the contrast between its loose morals and the pure love of Caradoc and his mistress having been openly revealed (872-912).

Although there is a degree of action through the lai - the bringing of the mantel to the court, the ladies trying on the mantel - this cannot be said to define its narrative structure. The degeneracy of

the court remains at the end of the lai as at the beginning, so, too, the faithful love relationship between Caradoc and his mistress remains unaltered. What development there is through the story comes only through the public revelation of the situation that has previously existed concealed.

It is, however, in the very fact of the lack of development wrought by the experience of the chastity test, that the significance of the lai is demonstrated, this lying in the contrast that exists between the good love of Caradoc and his mistress and the decadence of the rest of the court. It is this contrast that comes to be focused upon through the lai.

#### LAI DU COR

Like the Lai du Mantel, this lai appears above all as an anecdote<sup>19</sup>. As in Mantel, the significance of the lai lies in the contrast between the relationship of Caradoc and his wife, based on trust and fidelity, and the relationships of the other members of the court, based on suspicion and unfaithfulness. It is this contrast that is highlighted through the lack of significant development in the narrative, the same polarisation between good and bad love relations existing at the beginning of the lai and at the end.

#### I Initial Situation

Arthur's court assembled for the Whitsun festivities, apparently splendid (5-32).

## II The Chastity Test

1. The young man brings the magical drinking horn to the court (33-168).

2. The King and the other members of the court all fail in their attempts to drink from the horn, revealing either their own lack of trust or the unfaithfulness of their mistresses (169-486).

3. Caradoc, by contrast, successfully drinks from the horn without spilling the wine, thereby proving the quality of the relationship between him and his wife (487-576).

## III Final Situation

Caradoc and his wife are happy in their relationship.

The other members of the Arthurian court continue happily also in their less than perfect relationships (577-82).

## NARCISUS

The narrative structure of this lai is based on the experiences of the two protagonists, each striving towards a fulfilment in love that is doomed. The narrative lines of their experiences are separate, but interwoven, finally fusing in the death of the young couple, a union that can possibly be read symbolically as the ultimate fulfilment in love transcending death. The movement of the two individuals towards the fulfilment in love to which they aspire is expressed equally as a movement away from society, both in the physical and in the moral sense; the lai offers, then, a clearly defined opposition between love and society, with the power of love asserted as the dominant force, overcoming the restraint of

civilisation.

In developing the figure of the heroine into a rounded character very far removed from the shadowy Echo of the Ovidian tale, the French author establishes her as being at least as important as Narcissus himself in the development of the narrative. This he exploits through the structure by setting the experiences of the two lovers into a relationship of parallelism, with the text falling naturally into two sections<sup>20</sup>.

#### I Initial Situation: Pre-Love (59-130)

Narcissus as a fine young man. (59-126)

Dan  as a princess. (127-30)

#### II 1. Dan 's love for Narcissus

i) Dan  sees Narcissus and falls in love with him. (131-424)

ii) Dan  takes the initiative, seeking to achieve fulfilment in her love for Narcissus, going to the woods and declaring her love to him (425-86).

iii) Narcissus rejects Dan 's love, refusing ever to love her (487-510).

iv) Dan 's despair in the hopelessness of a love that is unreciprocated. This despair is expressed in her prayer to the gods for revenge against Narcissus (511-630).

#### II 2. Narcissus's love for his Reflection

i) Narcissus sees his own reflection and falls in love with it

(631-79).

ii) Narcissus declares his love to the reflection, trying to make it respond (680-834).

iii) Narcissus realises that the object of his love is his own reflection, which will never respond to his appeals (835-66).

iv) Narcissus's despair in the hopelessness of his love that can never be reciprocated. His despair is expressed through his turning to the inevitability of death (867-940).

### III Final Situation

The death of the lovers, united in their moment of death, possibly united also after death through love (941-1010).

The final situation of their being brought together, having sacrificed themselves to the power of love, appears in contrast to the initial situation which presented them separately, before they became embroiled in such love.

The parallelism that exists in the experiences of love of the two young people highlights the similarities and essential compatibility between them - each suffering with equal intensity in their passion, each prepared to sacrifice all for the sake of love. This serves to reinforce the tragedy of their final reconciliation at the time of their deaths. In setting side by side the experiences of the lovers in their doomed pursuit of love, the extent of the parallelism is made particularly clear: -

II 1 i	D falls in love with N for his physical beauty		II 2 i	N falls in love with the reflection for its beauty
II 1 ii	D has hope of fulfil- ment in love		II 2 ii	N has hope of fulfil- ment in love
	D declares her love			N declares his love
II 1 iii	the love is not re- ciprocated		II 2 iii	the love is not re- ciprocated
II 1 iv	D's despair (monologue)		II 2 iv	N's despair (monologue)
	D suffers sense of social isolation, esp. from her family			N suffers sense of social isolation esp. from his family

This exact parallelism in the sufferings of the two lovers in their unrequited love appears to an extent as an assertion of justice. Dané's suffering is caused by Narcisus's indifference to her, it is therefore, a just punishment that he should suffer in a way that is identical. This notion of justice is indicated in the text, as being the response of the gods to Dané's prayers for vengeance against Narcisus.

A diagram relating to the narrative structure demonstrates how the experiences of the two lovers are set in a pattern of interaction to define the development of the story: -

FULFILMENT  
IN LOVE

NON-FULFILMENT  
IN LOVE

I Initial sit.  
Pre-love

II 1 i D falls in love  
with N

ii D declares her love

iii N refuses to respond

iv D's despair

II 2 i N falls in love  
with reflection

ii N declares his love

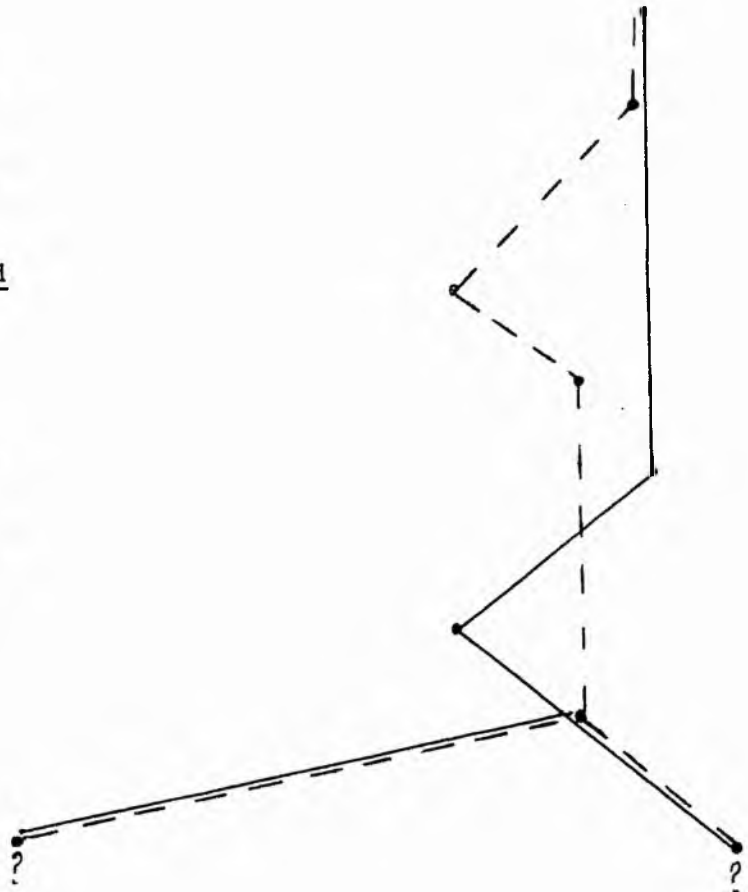
iii reflection does  
not respond

iv N's despair

III Final sit.  
Death of couple

Dané's love — — —

Narcisus's love ———



PIRAMUS ET TISBE

Piramus et Tisbé is similar to Narcisus in its focus on the progressive efforts of its protagonists towards achieving fulfilment in a love that is doomed, also in its uses of parallels through the structure to indicate the equivalence of the lovers in their passion and their compatibility. Here also, this parallelism between the experiences in love of the two lovers serves in particular to highlight the tragedy of the deaths of the lovers, at which point the two lines of their experiences converge as the couple are united in their love, but in death not in life as they had wished for.

In Piramus et Tisbé, in contrast to Narcisus, it is the reciprocity of the lovers binding them together throughout the lai that is the essential feature of their love. It is to emphasise this that the author of Piramus et Tisbé exploits the patterns of parallelism in a quite different way. Instead of the parallels emerging from the division of the lai into two sections, the latter echoing the former; each stage of the development of the story is so composed, the parallels, being, therefore, immediately juxtaposed. This is achieved by means of a series of monologues, coupled to allow first one, then the other of the lovers to express the same sentiments as they simultaneously undergo the same experiences in their love, albeit in physical separation from each other.

The tragic irony of the final situation is underlined by the same structural device that is used by Marie in Equitan and Deus Amanz, appearing as an abrupt and irreversible reversal of the linear progression that has been traced through the narrative to this point. It is by the very means that are intended to secure the ultimate fulfilment in love that has been the goal of the lovers throughout that they lose all chance of any such happiness in their love<sup>21</sup>.

#### I Initial Situation:

Piramus and Tisbé as children, united in their first childish love for each other (1-82).

#### II 1 The Intervention of the Mother: Absolute Non-Fulfilment in Love

The first period of the fulfilment in love of the couple is brought to an end by the discovery of their relationship by the mother, who separates them and allows them no contact. The lovers experience



extreme anguish in their love that is in no sense fulfilled (83-312).

i) Píramus's first monologue (150-203).

ii) Tisbé's first monologue (221-306).

## II 2. The Discovery of the Chink: Partial Fulfilment in Love

The discovery of the chink in the wall between the two houses allows the lovers to have some, albeit limited, contact. Although physically separated still, they are able to talk to each other through the hole. This is in itself an improvement on their earlier situation, and although the lovers still suffer a great deal because of the restrictions on their love, they express hope of possible reunion in love in the future (313-595).

i) Píramus's second monologue (408-98).

ii) Tisbé's second monologue (503-89).

## II. 3. The Lovers in the Garden: Hope of Love → Despair

Separately the lovers go into the garden in order to be reunited and with the hope of achieving absolute and permanent fulfilment in love (596-919).

i) Tisbé comes into garden first. She is frightened away by the lion.

ii) Píramus comes into the garden. He discovers Tisbé's blood-stained wimple left by the lion.

iii) Piramus's third monologue (708-76).

Believing Tisbé to be dead, he stabs himself.

iv) Tisbé's third monologue (831-89).

Seeing Piramus to be dying, she stabs herself.

### III Final Situation: Union in Death

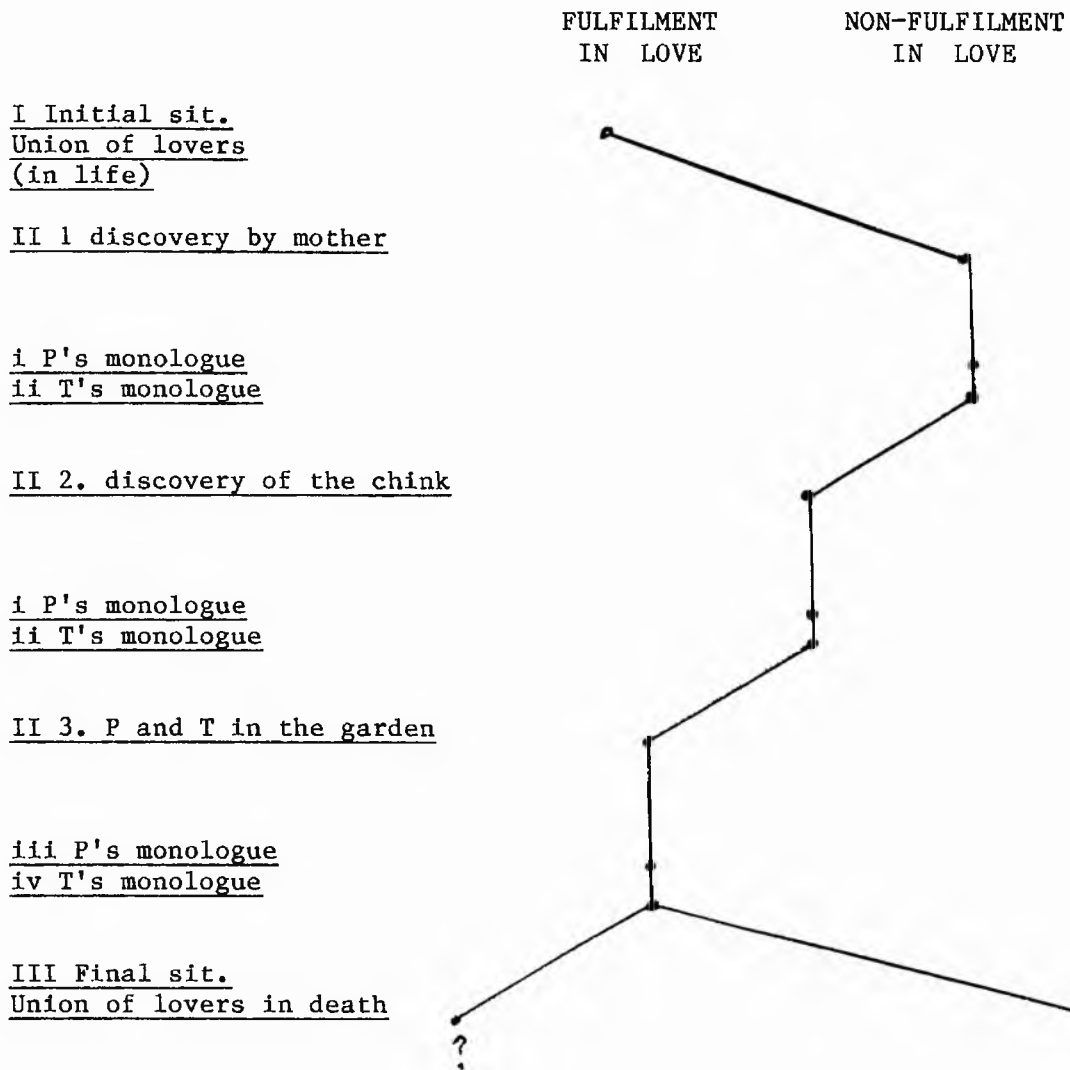
The lovers die together, having lost forever the possibility of the fulfilment in love to which they aspired. The death offers, however, the possibility of permanent union in love after death (920-21).

It is evident that the final situation appears as both a parallel and a reversal of the initial situation. It is only at these two points in the lai that the lovers are physically united in their love; on the first occasion it is at the beginning of their lives (there is emphasis on their extreme youth) on the second at the very end of their lives. If at the beginning there can be hope of their achieving fulfilment in their love in life, by the end their only hope of fulfilment in love lies in death.

Between these two points the narrative advances in three times, each corresponding to a distinctly different stage in their relationship, from a total lack of fulfilment in love, through partial fulfilment in love and hope, to despair of achieving fulfilment in love. These developments in the relationship are expressed through the lovers' monologues. These three pairs of monologues, which compose much of the text, emphasise the quality of their love for each other and the intensity of their suffering in its being unfulfilled. The monologues appear as the essence of the

lai in terms of its significance as a testimony to this love. In terms of the narrative development, however, they represent periods of stasis. The articulations in the narrative, allowing the lovers to move from one stage in their relationship to the next, are provided by the actions that take place between the three sets of monologues, the discovery of the relationship by the mother, the discovery of the chink in the wall, the lovers going into the garden, the lion in the garden. Only in the third of these central episodes are the monologues accompanied by actions that directly advance the narrative, when the lovers in the course of their lamentations commit suicide.

What Piramus et Tisbé offers, then, is a narrative structure that is unique in the lais, composed of a balance of action and stasis. Each of the three central episodes is identical in its structural pattern, which consists of a brief period of abrupt, decisive action followed by a much longer period corresponding to the lover's monologues. This serves to focus on each episode in its deeper significance, lying beneath the action, which is a distinct experience of a love relationship in different stages in its development. This balance between action and stasis through the narrative appears clearly in the following diagram: -



### DESIRE

The narrative structure of Desiré is very far from being the tight and coherent composition that we find in many of the lais. There are whole episodes, as well as numerous details, that do not contribute directly to the development of the story and that appear to have been included for their own sake<sup>22</sup>. This is rare in the lais in which brevity usually precludes the inclusion of gratuitous material. The text of Desiré appears as the conjunction of two stories, independent from each other in narrative significance and structure, the first concerned with Desiré's parents, the second, the main story, being that of Desiré himself. The former could

easily be removed from the lai, without in any way affecting the intelligibility of the main story. Contributing nothing directly to the narrative structure of the main story this story of Desiré's parents could stand on its own as a narrative complete in itself. Unlike some of the later episodes in the lai - which are indeed of no more than anecdotal interest - this first section does, however, serve a role within the lai as a whole, introducing some of the motifs that will be central to the main story, namely religion, fulfilment in marriage and the parent-child relationship. It thereby contributes directly to the reader's appreciation of the significance of the lai, and we shall see subsequently how this interaction at the thematic level between the two stories - that of Desiré's parents and that of Desiré himself - is exploited in narrative terms also.

#### A Preliminary Story: Desiré's Parents

##### I Initial Situation

Desiré's parents happily married but childless; the marriage appears then as not wholly fulfilled (14-24).

II Desiré's parents go to the shrine of Saint Giles to pray for a child (25-48).

##### III Final Situation

The birth of a son, Desiré. This compensates for the initial lack in the marriage, enabling it to be wholly fulfilled (49-61).

#### B Main Story: Desiré

##### I Initial Situation

Desiré as an exemplary young knight, well integrated into courtly,

chivalric society (62-94).

There is no mention of his having any interest in love.

II 1. i) Desiré rides into the forest, he decides to visit the hermit (95-133).

ii) Desiré meets the fairy, and, falling in love, is distracted from thoughts of visiting the hermit (134-246). This introduces an opposition between love and religion.

iii) Desiré enjoys a period of happiness in his relationship with the lady, while living in society. They have two children (247-66). This represents a balance between social fulfilment and personal fulfilment, although not a full reconciliation between the two aspects of Desiré's life.

II 2. i) Desiré rides into the forest, with the intention of seeing his mistress (267-72).

ii) Desiré visits the hermit and confesses about his relationship with the fairy. As a result of this Desiré immediately loses his mistress's love (273-331). The opposition between love and religion is re-asserted.

iii) Desiré's illness. Desiré suffers greatly from the loss of his mistress's love, a grief expressed through his illness which prevents him from participating actively in society although he lives within it (332-58). Thus in this period Desiré suffers from both social and personal fulfilment; he has also turned against religion.

II 3. 1) The fairy comes to Desiré. She assures him that he has not totally lost her love. She takes Holy Communion (359-413). This interlude offers a reconciliation between love and religion.

ii) Desiré is restored to full health and becomes an active member of society again. The fairy, however, has left him, so although this is a period of fulfilment in social terms for Desiré, he is still lacking fulfilment in love (414-40).

III 4 1) Desiré's son comes to visit him in the Real World (441-86).

ii) Desiré's son returns to his mother in the Other World (487-507).

II 5. 1) Desiré is taken by the dwarf to visit the fairy (508-654).

ii) Desiré returns to society in the Real World, leaving his mistress behind (655-70).

II 6. The fairy comes to the court. She asks for her children to be integrated into society, and to be married to Desiré (671-758).

### III Final Situation

Desiré and the fairy are married and have left the Real World forever for fulfilment in love in the Other World.

Their children are socially integrated within the Real World (759-61).

The main part of the lai is evidently focused, primarily, in the relationship between Desiré and his mistress. and, to a lesser

extent, on the story of their children. The structure of the narrative is to a large extent based on the developments in the love relationship, tracing it from its first inception to the final marriage. The intermediary stages of the relationship are defined by the positive/negative interaction between love and both society and religion. It is the presentation of the relationship between love and Christianity that is the most striking and original feature of the lai; the two forces appear initially in opposition before finally being reconciled. The opposition of love and religion is confronted and emphasised through the narrative structure, by means of parallels and reversals existing between different sections of the story, as can be seen from a comparison of the two episodes centring on Desiré's riding into the forest: -

I	D well integrated in society and happy	/	II 1 iii	D well integrated in society and happy
II 1 i	D rides into the forest	//	II 2 i	D rides into the forest
	D's attention turned to religion (intention to visit hermit)	X		D's attention turned to love (intention to see mistress)
II 1 ii	Love distracts D from his religious intention	X	II 2 ii	Religion distracts D from his amorous intention
	D does not visit hermit	X		D visits hermit
	D gains fulfilment in love	X		D loses fulfilment in love
II 1 iii	D personally and socially fulfilled	X	II 2 iii	D lacking both social and personal fulfilment

Through Desiré's experiences in these two episodes the opposition between love and religion is clearly established. It is the desire for fulfilment in love that first causes Desiré to lapse from his religious obligations. In reversal of this it is, in the later episode, because of his observance of his religious obligations that Desiré loses his mistress's love. The lesson apparently to be drawn



from these two experiences - presented through the first and reinforced through the second - is, however, misleading. It is that of conventional Church teaching in which extra-marital love is presented as a denial of Christian morality.

Having presented in this way the traditional opposition between religion and love, the author, through subsequent episodes, proposes a basis of reconciliation between the two. This is the purpose of the fairy's visit to Desiré during his period of illness; it is specifically to convince him that their love is not wholly contrary to Christian morality that she comes to him, and having done so she leaves him again<sup>23</sup>. Within the narrative structure also the sole value of this episode lies in its offering a defence of love in such terms to counter the lesson offered through Desiré's previous experiences. It is particularly significant that it should be the fairy who appears as the mouthpiece of such notions of Christianity. The earlier episodes in suggesting the polarisation of love and religion have, by association indicated also the polarisation of the characters of the fairy, as the personification of the power of love, and of the hermit, as the embodiment of the Church. This episode, which serves no direct role in the development of the narrative, serves then to break down the opposition, anticipating the reconciliation of these two forces ultimately achieved through the marriage of Desiré and the fairy. The significance of the marriage as the sanctioning of their love by the Church is emphasised.

It is because of the particular significance of religion in the relationship of Desiré and the fairy, providing them with the means of achieving absolute fulfilment in this relationship, that we see

the integral connection between it and the story of Desiré's parents. There are, indeed, essential similarities between these two relationships, despite the very obvious differences between the two, as can be seen from a comparison of the marriage of Desiré's parents with the episode of Desiré's own marriage: -

A I	D's parents not wholly fulfilled in their relationship		B II 6	D and fairy not wholly fulfilled in their relationship
	D's parents married	X		D and fairy not married
	Childless	X		They have two children
A II	Religious solution as means to fulfilment (visit to shrine)			Religious solution as means to fulfilment (marriage)
A III	Fulfilment achieved (birth of Desire)		B III	Fulfilment achieved (union in marriage)

Thus through both relationships religion is asserted as a positive force, and as a direct means to the achievement of personal fulfilment<sup>24</sup>. The image of marriage offered in the story of Desiré's parents serves to confirm and reinforce that of the union of the lovers at the end of the lai, as the relationship that is personally fulfilling, sanctioned by society and blessed by God. It is in the parallels that exist between these two relationships that we see the role that the preliminary story has in contributing to the reader's appreciation of the lai as a whole <sup>25</sup>.

The episodes that are wholly superfluous to the development of the narrative and that contribute nothing directly to a reading of the text are those of the visit of Desiré's son to the Real World and of Desiré's visit to the fairy in the castle. These do not in any way help to advance the story; appearing as hermetic incidents within the lai, as mere anecdotes or padding. Their interest in terms of

this study lies only in their focus on different forms of personal fulfilment, the former providing Desiré with a short period of happiness in his relationship with his son, the latter allowing him an even briefer moment of reunion with his mistress.

Thus, although not all the episodes included in the lai fulfil a significant role within the narrative structure, they are all related in their focus on the relationships between lovers/spouses or between parents and children, the significance of the lai as a whole lying in the possibilities of positive interaction between love, religion and society. It is in this that we find the essential coherence of the lai. As can be seen from the following diagram, there is nonetheless, a large degree of coherence to be found at the level of the narrative structure, despite this evidently not being a consideration of primary importance for the author in the composition of his story: -

A I Initial sit.  
D's parents married

A II visit to St. Giles

A III birth of D

B I Initial sit.  
D as knight pre-love

B II 1 i D goes to forest

ii D meets fairy

iii D in balance of love  
and social fulfilment

B II 2 i D goes to forest

ii D visits hermit

iii D's illness

B II 3 i visit of fairy

ii D restored to health

B II 4 visit of D's son

ii D's son returns to  
Other World

B 5 i D visits fairy

ii D leaves fairy

B II 6 fairy comes to court

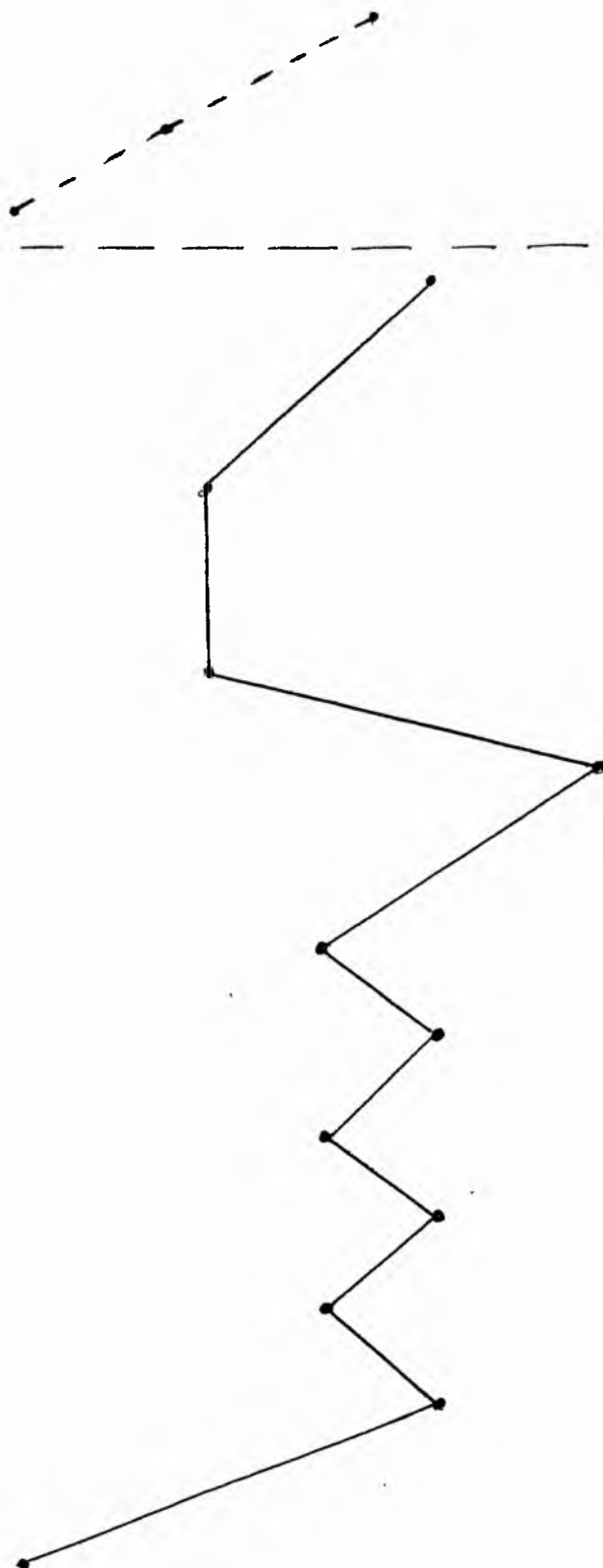
III Final sit.  
marriage

Desiré ———

Desiré's parents — — —

FULFILMENT

NON-FULFILMENT



## DOON

The narrative structure of Doon, like that of Milun, is defined by the intertwining of two relationships, one between a son and his parents, the other between the parents. It is only when ultimately there is a fusion of the two strands of the narrative that fulfilment can be achieved in either of them. The significance of the relationships both in non-fulfilment and in fulfilment is equally in personal and social terms.

### I Initial Situation

Pre-marriage. There is a lack of personal and social fulfilment in the lives of both Doon and the princess, because of the lady's unwillingness to commit herself to marriage (7-66).

II 1. i) The marriage trial. Through this Doon demonstrates his skills as a knight. This leads directly to his marriage (67-156).

ii) The marriage. The union of Doon and the lady in marriage should represent a permanent relationship, providing the couple with both personal and social fulfilment. As such it survives only three days, however (157-62).

II 2. Doon leaves his wife and unborn son, thereby negating the significance of marriage as a form of social and personal fulfilment (162-213).

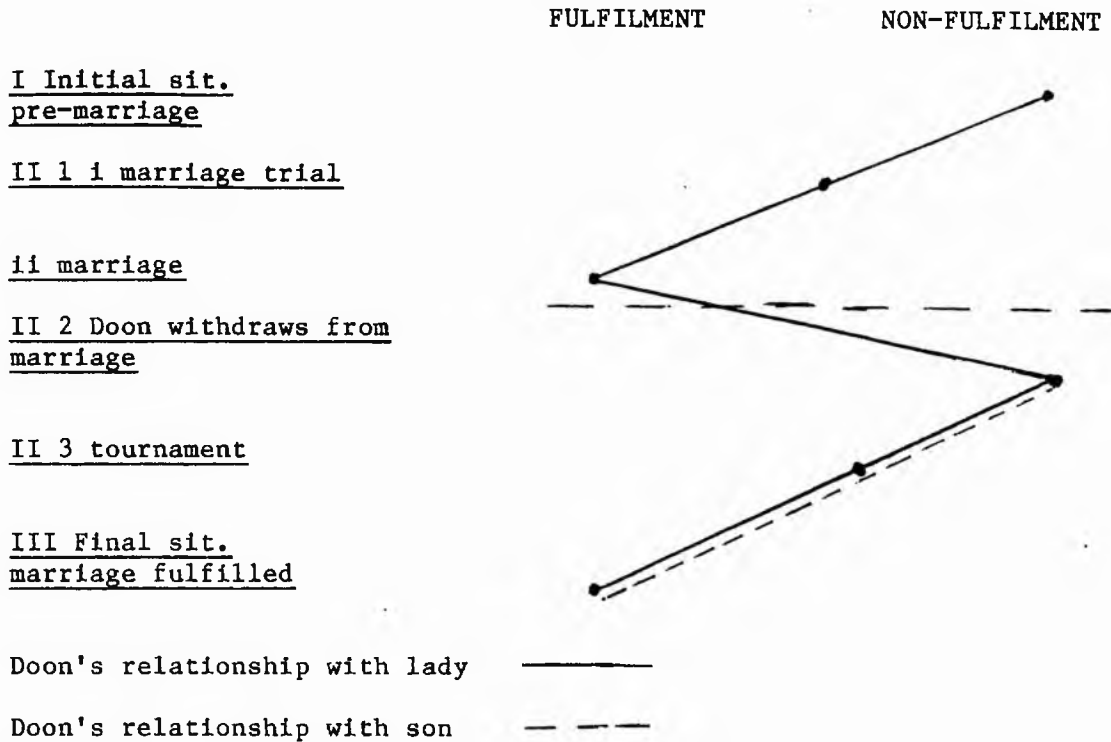
II 3. The tournament. Through this Doon demonstrates his skills as a knight. It leads directly to his reunion with his son (214-74).

### III Final Situation

Fulfilled marriage between Doon and the princess, complemented by close relationship with their son (274-86).

The lai clearly falls into two sections, both culminating in a marital relationship between Doon and the princess; it is however only at the end of the second section, at the end of the lai as a whole, that their marriage contracted at the end of the first section is able to become a marriage in its full sense as a fusion of personal and social fulfilment. It is only then that both Doon and the lady have come to appreciate fully the significance of marriage as a relationship based on the commitment of both spouses equally. At the time of their marriage initially it is only Doon who has suffered for the sake of it, the source being in the lady's own reluctance: it is she who has erected the obstacles to their union. It is specifically to punish her for her negative attitude to the marriage that Doon withdraws from their relationship, so that she will suffer from the consequences of his indifference as he has suffered from hers. There is, thus, a parallelism between the two sections, exploited to highlight the more fundamentally significant differences. The quality of the good marital and familial relationship existing at the end of the lai is enhanced by contrast with the shallowness of the marriage as it appears at the end of the first section.

The extent of the parallelism between the two sections appears from the following diagram, which indicates how the structure of the narrative is derived from the double movement towards fulfilment of the relationship between Doon and the lady and that between Doon and his son: -



### GUINGAMOR

Although a part of the same tradition as Lanval, Desiré and Graelent in its basic subject matter - the love relationship between a mortal and a fairy - the focus in this lai is directed more at the relationship between Guingamor and the King than it is at the love relationship<sup>26</sup>. The importance of the feudal relationship, which is also a familial relationship - Guingamor is the King's nephew - lies equally in its social and in its personal significance for Guingamor. It is this relationship that motivates Guingamor in his actions throughout the lai. As in the other lais in the same tradition, it is, however, the female characters who, in their intervention in Guingamor's life, serve to articulate the narrative.

### I Initial Situation

Guingamor is well integrated in the court of his uncle, the King. Here he enjoys both personal and social fulfilment, centred on his

relationship with his uncle (5-22).

## II 1. Intervention of the Queen

The Queen offers her love to Guingamor. This represents an attempt to change his life by introducing into it a dimension of fulfilment in love.

This fails because Guingamor rejects her love on the grounds that it would be a betrayal of his relationship with his uncle (23-120).

## II 2. i) Intervention of the Queen

The Queen turns her anger against Guingamor, and deliberately, although obliquely, applies pressure upon him to force him to undertake the hunt of the white boar (121-244).

## 2. ii) Guingamor goes into the Forest

Guingamor submits to the Queen's will in taking up her challenges. His willingness to undertake this quest is prompted by his desire to prove his worth to his uncle. In his pursuit of the boar, Guingamor goes alone into the forest, this is the severing of his relations with the King, the royal court and with the chivalric society to which he belongs (244-396).

## II 3. i) Intervention of the Fairy

Guingamor meets the fairy who offers him her love and also the white boar, inviting him to her palace (397-502).

## ii) Guingamor goes to the Fairy's Palace

Guingamor accepts the fairy's love and her offer of help. It is the latter that is of greater importance to him as being the means for



him to return to his uncle with proof of his success in the hunt. In going with the fairy to her palace Guingamor leaves the Real World, this represents a further distancing from his own society and the relationships he has enjoyed within it, in time as well as in space as 300 years have passed.

He enjoys much happiness in his love relationship with the fairy (503-44).

#### II 4. i) Intervention of the Fairy

The fairy gives Guingamor the white boar and the King's hound with which he can return to the Real World (545-70).

##### ii) Guingamor goes to the Real World

Guingamor's reason for return to the Real World is to be able to rejoin his uncle - he does not believe what the fairy has told him about the passing of time. Once in the Real World he discovers that his uncle is dead, the royal court has disappeared and that he has, therefore, been cut off forever from his own natural society (571-654).

#### II 5. i) Intervention of the Fairy Maidens

When Guingamor has eaten the three apples and is close to dying, the fairy maidens come to save him (655-62).

##### ii) Guingamor goes to the Other World

The fairies take Guingamor away from the Real World, never to return (663-67).

### III Final Situation

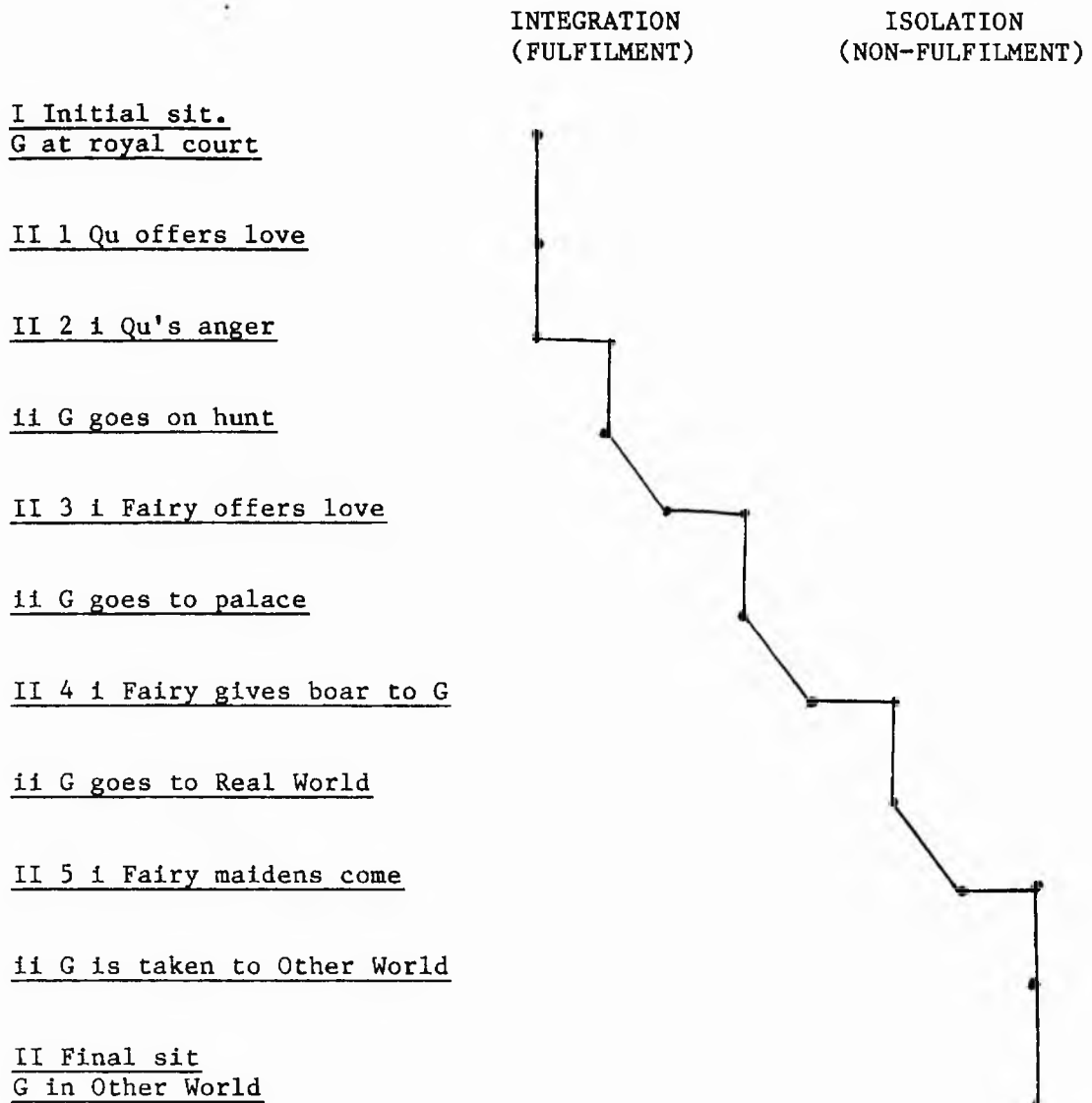
This is a complete reversal of the initial situation. Guingamor is now forever removed from the court in the Real World in which he initially lived and participated, distanced by time as well as by physical distance. He has lost all chance of achieving social fulfilment in chivalric or feudal terms. Most importantly the bond between him and his uncle has been permanently severed.

It can be assumed, although it is not specifically stated in the text, that he is now able to enjoy fulfilment in love in his relationship with the fairy - a dimension of personal fulfilment that was quite lacking from his life initially (668-78).

Clearly in barest structural terms Guingamor is very close to Lanval, Graelent and Desiré, in tracing the movement of the hero from an initial situation of social isolation to one of personal fulfilment in the Other World. More even than in these other lais, the fairy mistress appears as a dynamic force in directing the young knight towards his final situation. In the portrayal of the Queen as a negative force in the hero's life, we find further similarities with Lanval and Graelent. There is not, however, the same emphasis on the contrast between her role and that of the fairy as is to be found in Lanval and Graelent. This is essentially because in Guingamor the positive significance of good love is of less relevance. Here, rather, Guingamor's relationship with the fairy is set in contrast with his relationship with the King. It is this latter relationship that is the internally motivating force of Guingamor in all that he does - in undertaking the hunt, in going to the fairy's palace, in returning to the Real World. Guingamor is, however, a passive figure. He acts only in response to the

intervention of some other person, who either compels him, prompts him or aids him towards his goal, which remains, throughout, fulfilment in his relationship with the King. In each case the 'other person' is female, the Queen, who makes him undertake the hunt; the fairy, who takes him to her palace and provides him with the means to return to the Real World; the fairy maidens, who take him back to the Other World at the end of the lai. On each occasion the action Guingamor is prompted into taking is one of physical displacement - into the forest; to the fairy's palace; to the Real World. Ironically, the purpose of his actions - to return to the King - is negated by the actuality of them, as each takes him further away from achieving his aim.

Each of the episodes in the lai is thus composed of two parts: the intervention of a woman (women) as a dynamic force, causing the physical displacement of Guingamor for the sake of his relationship with the King. It is this basic pattern that, repeated in different circumstances through the lai, forms the basis of the narrative structure, as we see clearly in the following diagram: -



From this it is evident how different Guingamor is from Desiré, Lanval and Graelent in its essence; the fundamentally significant relationship for Guingamor is the one he had enjoyed with his uncle. It is recognising the importance of this relationship for Guingamor throughout the lai that we can appreciate the degree of structural coherence in the narrative, an aspect that has, on occasion, been overlooked<sup>27</sup>.

## GRAELEN

The narrative structure of Graelent is based on the developments in the hero's relationships with, on one side, the fairy and, on the other, the King and the society of the royal court. These two types of relationship - personal and social - are developed through changes in the patterns of interaction between them; these appearing sometimes as a conflict, sometimes as a degree of balance. In particular the figure of the Queen appears as a direct contrast with the fairy, both in her intrinsic personal character and in her role within the narrative as defined through her relationship with Graelent.

In many of these aspects - characterisation, themes and structural patterns - Graelent appears very similar to Lanval.

Graelent, more emphatically than Lanval, divides into two distinct sections, bound by a series of parallels and reversals highlighted through the narrative structure.

### I Initial Situation

Graelent is presented as a knight of prowess, a good vassal, well integrated into the life of the royal court (5-18).

II 1. i) The Queen, attracted to Graelent because of his chivalric prowess, offers her love to Graelent. This he rejects (19-128).

ii) The Queen, in her anger at being rejected, turns the King against Graelent. The means of this is unspecified, but clearly underhand and unjustifiable (129-52).

iii) As a result of losing the King's favour, Graelent is unable to participate actively in society (153-58).

iv) Unhappy in his social isolation, Graelent rides out of town (159-205).

II 2 i) Graelent, while alone in the forest, meets the fairy, who offers him her love, which he accepts and reciprocates (206-328).

ii) Graelent returns to the court, provided by the fairy with the means for his social reintegration (329-94).

II 3. Graelent enjoys a period of social and personal fulfilment, the two as a balance (395-410).

II 4. i) The Whitsun festivities: Graelent angers the Queen by not participating in the toast to her beauty (411-36).

ii) Offended and angry, the Queen turns the King against Graelent, because of this gesture of disrespect, which is a dishonour against the King as well as against herself (437-76).

Simultaneously Graelent loses his mistress's love (477-98).

iii) Graelent suffers a period of non-fulfilment both in terms of his relationship with the fairy and in terms of his relationship with the King and society. This is a complete reversal of his situation prior to the Whitsun festivities (499-523).

iv) The trial: The fairy comes to the trial and thereby proves Graelent to be innocent of the charges against him (524-634).

v) The King is just in acquitting Graeent and in thereby providing Graeent with every chance of fulfilment in court society (635-38).

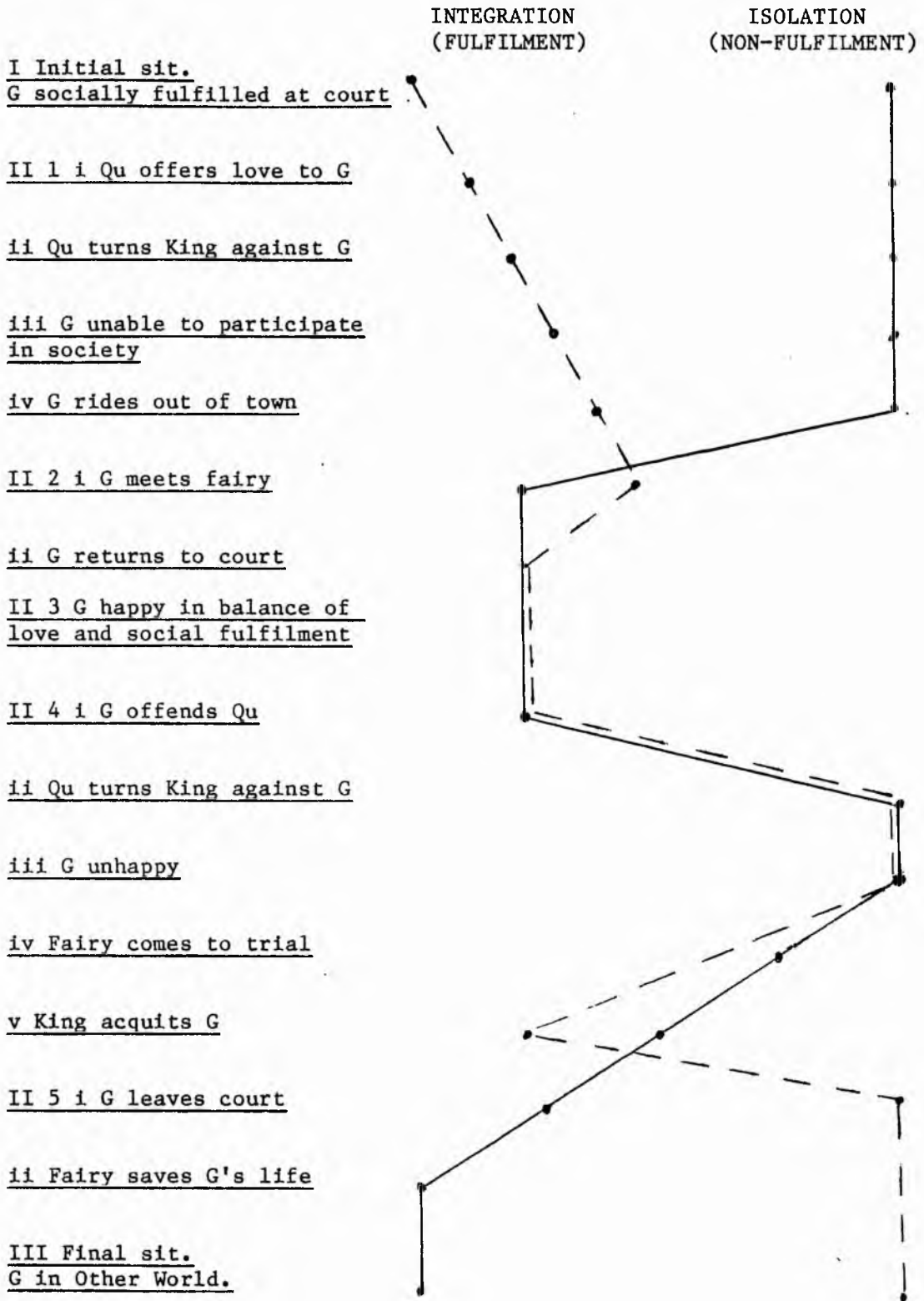
II 5 i) Graeent takes the initiative in leaving the court in pursuit of the fairy, despite her apparent indifference. In his determination to secure her love he almost drowns crossing the perilous river after her (639-97).

ii) Finally the fairy intervenes to save him in a gesture of her love. She then takes him to the Other World (698-720).

### III Final Situation

Graeent fulfilled in love in the Other World, a total reversal of his initial situation (721-30).

The whole of the narrative structure of Graeent is, thus, defined in terms of the interaction between different forms of social and personal fulfilment and non-fulfilment. This is indicated in the following diagram: -



Graelent's relationship with the fairy (love) ———

Graelent's relationship with King and society - - -

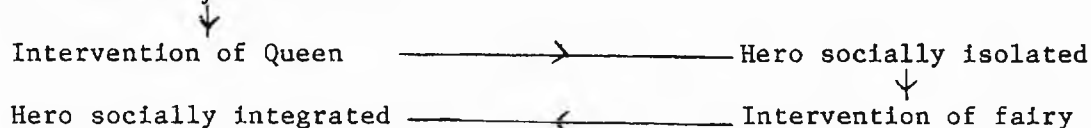
From this diagram, particularly from a comparison of the initial and



final situations, we can see clearly that there is an opposition between fulfilment in social terms and fulfilment in love, with Grae lent moving from full integration in the court society of the Real World, to an abandonment of all of this for the sake of fulfilment in love in the Other World.

The relationship between social and personal fulfilment, between the Real World and the Other World, does not, however, exist simply in terms of an opposition. It is the fairy who as a gesture of her love provides Grae lent with the means of being reintegrated in society; it is the Queen who is responsible for forcing him into social isolation. From this we find the same pattern of interaction that we find in Lanval, setting the women as opposite forces intervening in the hero's life: -

Hero socially fulfilled



In Grae lent this pattern is exploited not once, as in Lanval, but twice. It is the basis of the structure of the two sections of Grae lent, the first culminating in Grae lent's return to the Real World after his first encounter with the fairy, the second culminating in his departure from the Real World in pursuit of the fairy. The extent to which the two sections relate through a series of parallels and reversals can be seen from a detailed comparison of them: -

I	G socially well integr- ated at royal court		II 3	G socially well integr- ated at royal court
	G lacking fulfilment in love	X		G fulfilled in love with fairy
II 1	G arouses Qu's anger (by rejecting her love)			G arouses Qu's anger (by not praising her beauty)

	Qu turns King against G	//		Qu turns King against G
	There is no justification for this	X		There is some justification for this (G's apparent lack of respect).
	King's grounds of grievance are unclear	X		The grounds for the King's anger are made clear
II 1 ii	King's anger expresses itself surreptitiously (withholding of merited rewards)	X	II 4 ii	King's anger expresses itself officially (demand for legitimate trial)
II 1 iii	Outcome of King's anger: G socially isolated (Lack of money)	//	II 4 iii	Outcome of King's anger: G socially isolated (awaiting trial)
	G also loveless	//		G also loveless
	No mention of his suffering sense of lack of love	X		G is very concerned about lack of love
II 2 i	Intervention of fairy (first meeting)	//	II 4 iv	Intervention of fairy (at trial)
II 2 ii	This leads to G's social reintegration (fairy's gifts)	//		This leads to G's social reintegration (fairy proves G's innocence)
	No mention of King's role in G's social reintegration	X	II 4 v	King plays active role G's social reintegration
II 3	G happy to be reintegrated in society	X	II 5 i	G chooses not to be reintegrated in society
	G stays in Real World	X		G leaves Real World
	G able to enjoy fulfilment in love	X		No chance for G to enjoy fulfilment in Real World
	Fairy's intervention leads to G's fulfilment in love	//		Fairy's intervention leads to G's fulfilment in love
	This is direct result of fairy's intervention	X		This is indirect result of fairy's intervention
	G passive in achieving achieving fulfilment in love	X		G takes initiative in achieving fulfilment in love

It is evident that the lai is very tightly constructed through a series of parallels and reversals, which serve to focus on the

changes that have taken place from the first section to the second section, which are centred on developments in his love relationship. The contrast between the Queen and the fairy is highlighted through the extreme difference in the impact that each have on Graellent's life, both in terms of his social relationships and his personal relationships. The Queen is clearly a wholly negative force, while the fairy is a positive force. It must, however, be noted that the role of the fairy is not identical in the two sections. It is essential for the narrative that the fairy's intervention on the second occasion should not lead directly and immediately to Graellent's fulfilment in love. This provides a contrast to the episode of their first encounter, and allows the narrative to advance through highlighting the development in Graellent's character. Whereas on the first occasion he is passive in accepting the fairy's offer of love, he has at the end of the trial episode to assert his commitment to their relationship and to take the initiative in seeking out her love.

This leads to the final episode of the lai, in which, for the third time, the fairy takes the initiative in helping Graellent towards fulfilment. This comes about through the fairy saving Graellent from drowning when he tries to cross the perilous river. This episode relates in detail as well as in basic form to the two main episodes of the lai. It is in particular to the episode of the first encounter between the fairy and Graellent that this final episode can be compared: -

II 1	G loveless	//	II 4	G loveless
	G physically isolated from society	//	II 5 1	G physically isolated from society
	G has no chance of participating in society	X		G has every chance of social fulfilment
II 2 1	G attempts to take initiative towards fulfilment in love (raping of fairy)	//		G attempts to take initiative towards fulfilment in love (pursuit of fairy)
	G really dependent on fairy's intervention (her coming to offer her love)	//	II 5 11	G really dependent on fairy (her saving him from drowning)
	G enjoys fulfilment in love	//		G enjoys fulfilment in love
	Love fulfilment in Real World	X		Love fulfilment in Other World.

At a sub-structural level we note the importance in both episodes of water as the boundary between the Real World and the Other World - on the first occasion as the pool in which the fairy is bathing; on the second occasion as the perilous river. On the second occasion the dénouement is provided by Graelent crossing this boundary in a way he does not even attempt to do in the earlier episode.

We see, then, how the structure as a whole is founded upon repetition and development. Situations do not remain static, but are advanced through the changes that occur in Graelent's social and personal relationships. It is from an appreciation of this that it is possible to see how well composed this lai is<sup>28</sup>.

We have seen how the author exploits the motif of the water as a boundary of the Other World to reinforce the pattern of repetition and change. Another such detail to be woven into the narrative to underline the structural patterns without directly contributing to the narrative development is that of the horse. This comes to

symbolise the state of Graellent's relationship with society. When Graellent first suffers a loss of the King's favour he becomes too poor to ride anything but a wretched nag: -

Ne li remest que engagier  
fors un ronci, n'est gaires cier  
Graellent 155-56

With such a horse it is clearly impossible for Graellent to do deeds of chivalry. One of the gifts that the fairy gives to Graellent, specifically to enable him to participate again in knightly society, is a fine horse. When Graellent is later prevented from participating in court life (while awaiting the trial), reference is made to the fine horse that he has: -

Monté est sor un bon destrier,  
Graellent 501

This underlines the difference between the two situations, the earlier one involving an undermining of his essential status in society, which on the second occasion is not the case, as the King and the feudal court are scrupulous in their observance of their legal rights and obligations in their trial of Graellent. The final, very specific reference to Graellent's horse comes at the end of the lai, when Graellent chooses to leave the court and go to the Other World. He leaves his horse behind him (711-26), a symbol of his renunciation of chivalric society.

We see, thus, how the whole of the narrative structure is defined in relation to developments in Graellent's social and personal relationships. Clearly similar to Lanval, Graellent has been accused of being a poor imitation. Whatever its debts to Marie's lai, Graellent exists with its own integrity and sophistication as a consciously constructed narrative, as is manifest from this analysis of the structure.

### OISELET

This is a didactic lai more than a properly narrative lai, the story line merely providing a setting in which the bird can express its moral message. The bird is the author's mouthpiece in propounding this moral of the wisdom and intrinsic superiority of the nobility, while the vilein is the personification of greed and baseness, the product of his low birth. The narrative serves as an illustration of the bird's precept, demonstrating the vilein's essential unworthiness through his relationship with the bird. The plot remains, nonetheless, subsidiary to the message.

#### I Initial Situation

The vilein is superficially living the life of a knight, apparently succeeding in his aspirations to be integrated into a higher echelon of society than is naturally his (1-184).

II 1. The vilein traps the bird, as an attempt to improve his own position in society, either through the possession or through the sale of such a precious thing (185-223).

II 2. The vilein releases the bird in the belief that it will instruct him in the three fundamentals of wisdom which will enhance his reputation and therefore his position in society (224-71).

II 3. The bird reveals through his three aphorisms that the vilein can never be worthy of the elevated position in society to which he aspires (272-380).

#### III Final Situation

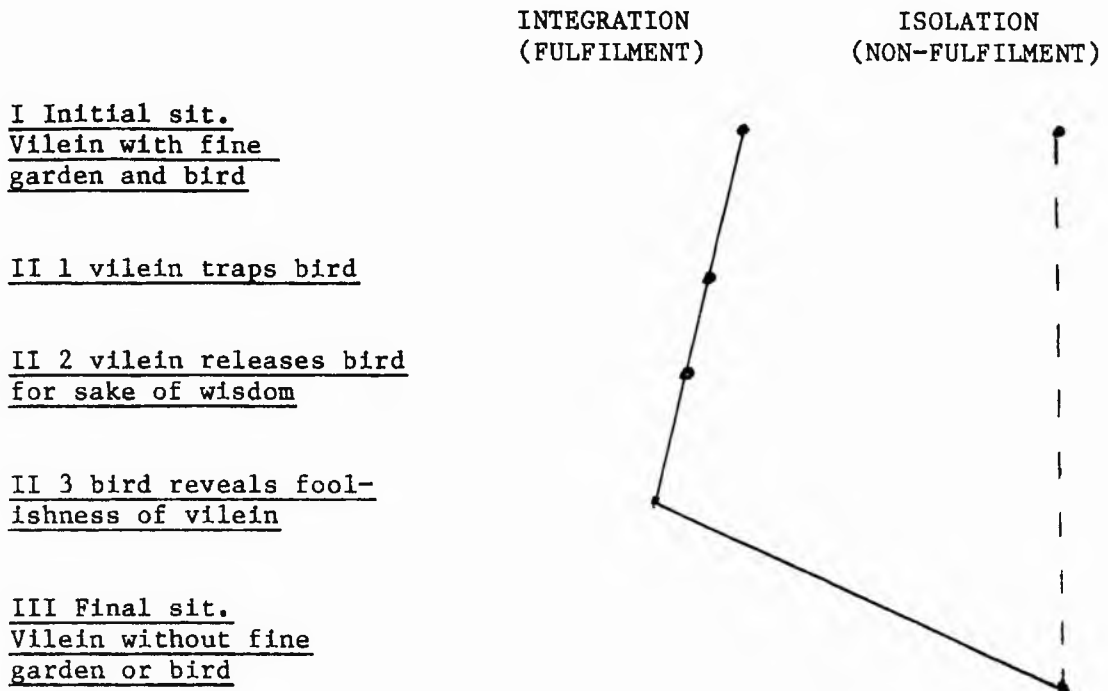
The bird has flown away, the garden has died and the vilein is left

without any of the trappings of nobility that he initially enjoyed, having demonstrated his unworthiness of them (381-90).

Thus we see that the story of the vilein and the bird serves primarily to reinforce the general message of the lai as a celebration of the virtues and courtliness of the nobility. The experience of the vilein from the initial situation to the final situation, which is in appearance a reversal of it, is less of an advance or development than a revelation of the underlying truth. The vilein does not deserve to be integrated into courtly society despite his ambitions and efforts to do so; and the superficial finery of his lifestyle at the beginning of the lai is no more than sham, rather than the natural externalisation of his own merit and character. Thus the narrative of the lai is less a movement from social fulfilment to non-fulfilment - as it at one level appears to be - than a demonstration that essentially the vilein has never achieved and never can achieve fulfilment in chivalric society.

There appears, then, a paradox between reality of the vilein's position in society which remains static and the apparent movement described through the narrative, following the vilein's attempts to advance his social ambitions first through possession of the bird, then through the bird's wisdom, attempts that are inevitably doomed to failure.

There is the further irony, indicated in the text although not highlighted through the narrative itself, that whereas the vilein's aspirations are focused on purely in terms of social fulfilment, expressed in material trappings, the true source of fulfilment to be enjoyed by the aristocracy is in love.



Vilein's true position in chivalric society — — —

Vilein's position in society in superficial appearance ———

### CONSEIL

The core of the lai is provided by the dialogue between the lady and the knight, with a few lines at the end of it to indicate the consequences of it in terms of the fulfilling love relationship of the couple, culminating in marriage. It is in this dialogue that the essential significance of the lai lies, offering, as it does, an exposition of good love contrasted with bad love, stressing the necessity of the honourable behaviour of lovers if they are to be worthy of fulfilment in their love. The structure of the lai is defined not by actions but by developments in the dialogue as the lady moves towards a greater appreciation of the virtues and conduct that are desirable for fulfilment in love. It is this acquisition of wisdom in the ways of love that allows the lady herself to be worthy of fulfilment in love. There exists, then, a parallel



development through the lai of the lady's acquiring wisdom in love at a theoretical level and in her acquiring fulfilment in love as an actual experience.

### I Initial Situation

Lady is loved by three men, but she is unable to choose between them and she remains, therefore, unfulfilled in love (18-27).

### II The Dialogue

1. The lady asks which of the three men to love, and discovers that it is not with any of them that she can find fulfilment in love as they are all unworthy of such felicity in love (28-744).

2. The lady having learned which virtues to value in a lover now falls in love with the knight who reciprocates her feelings - a love worthy of fulfilment (745-820).

### III Final Situation

Absolute fulfilment in love for the lady in her marriage to the knight (821-33).

Structurally, then, the lai traces a simple linear progression from the lady being initially without fulfilment in love to her enjoying absolute fulfilment in love according to the standards of amorous conduct expressed through the dialogue.

The intention of the lai is primarily didactic, the lady and the knight presented as models to be emulated, the purpose of their story essentially as a means of illustrating the lesson of good love to be learned from the dialogue.

FULFILMENT  
IN LOVE

NON-FULFILMENT  
IN LOVE

I Initial sit.  
Lady with three suitors

II the Dialogue

III Final sit.  
Lady married to knight



### AMOUR

Although the structure of the Lai d'Amour appears more obviously defined in terms of action and development in the story of the lovers than Conseil, the primary interest of this lai lies similarly in its exposition of the nature of ideal love. This is expressed through the correspondence between the lovers. Here too the story of the lovers serves as an illustration of the theory. Love is presented as transcending the physical separation of the lovers, it is, nonetheless, affected by this separation which is imposed upon the couple by the demands of society. It is this opposition between the desires of the lovers for personal fulfilment and the obligation for them to fulfil their social responsibilities that emerges most clearly at the level of the narrative structure.

#### I Initial Situation

The knight and the lady are both presented in terms of their social status and their merit in social terms. There is no mention of there being a love dimension to their lives (10-58).

#### II 1. Fulfilment in Love/Isolation from Society

The knight and the lady fall in love and enjoy a period of apparently unrestricted happiness in their relationship.

This is possible only because of the knight being away from his own country and his own people. This represents for him, then, a period of social non-fulfilment (59-169).

## II 2. Social Fulfilment/Partial Fulfilment in Love

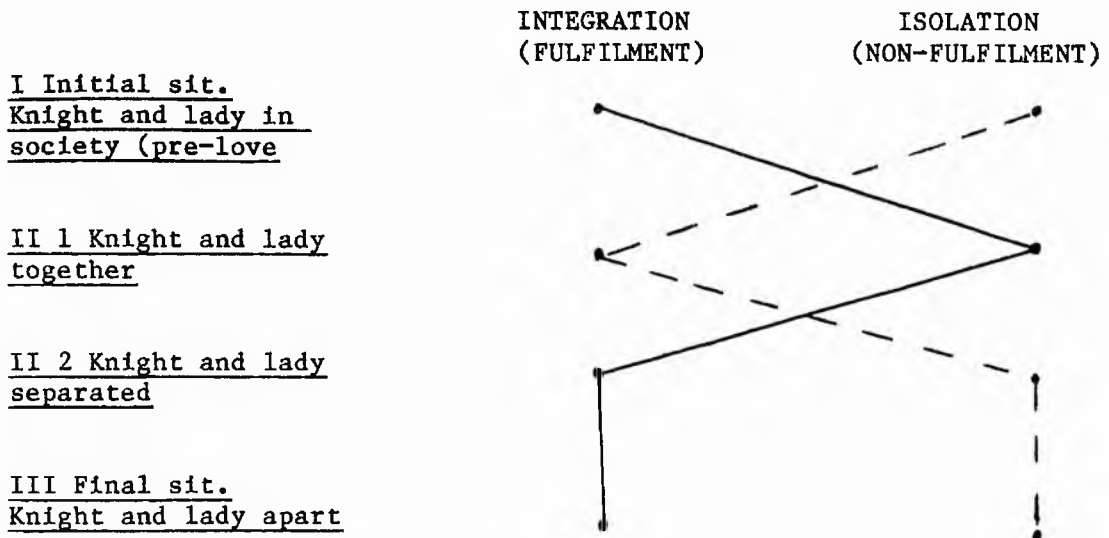
The knight returns to his own country, mindful of the need for him to fulfil his social obligations.

This entails the physical separation of the lovers, who are dependent on a correspondence for contact with each other (170-511).

## III Final Situation

The lovers are still physically separated, each living within his/her own society. Through their correspondence, however, they are assured of their continuing love for each other (512-18).

What is unusual in this lai is the unresolved situation with which the reader is left at the end of it, the author suggesting that there might be further developments in the story of the lady and the knight. Thus, in terms of narrative structure this is not a wholly satisfactory text. It is nonetheless, within itself, coherently composed on the basis of the physical displacement of the lover, highlighting the opposition between love and society, offering a double zig-zag pattern: -



Relationship between knight and lady ———

Relationship between knight and society - - -

Clearly this opposition between love and society is applicable in terms of the active participation of the knight in each of these relationships. Just as the emotional bond of love between the lovers is not broken by their physical separation, so the knight's allegiance to his social obligations survives his period of physical isolation from his own society.

### MELION

Although making use of the opposition between love and society that we find in many of the lais, the author of Melion establishes a relationship between the two that is somewhat unusual, as is evident from a consideration of the structure of the lai.

#### (A) I Initial Situation

Melion is a model of social fulfilment, actively participating in the court of King Arthur as a good knight and well-loved vassal. He

is, however, lacking in fulfilment in love (1-16).

II 1. i) Melion loses all chance of achieving fulfilment in love in Arthur's court, by antagonising all the ladies of the court (17-36).

ii) Melion is no longer happy with the degree of social fulfilment he has enjoyed and stops participating in the life of the court because of his unhappiness over his lack of fulfilment in love (37-60).

iii) Melion leaves the Arthurian court, enjoying neither fulfilment in love nor in social terms (61-70).

(B) II 2. i) Melion takes pleasure in knightly pursuits, while hunting he meets the Irish princess who offers him her love (71-116).

ii) Melion marries the princess and enjoys a period of both personal happiness in his marriage and of social fulfilment as lord of his lands. There is a balance between social and personal fulfilment (117-32).

II 3. i) Melion goes hunting, transforming into a wolf to capture the stag for his wife (133-88).

(C) ii) Melion's wife betrays him, leaving him to go to Ireland. Melion has lost her love, and, forced to remain in the form of a wolf, he cannot resume his position in society (189-218).

iii) Melion goes to Ireland where he lives as a wolf among other wild animals, behaving like them. This is a most extreme state of

isolation from civilised society both in terms of physical separation and in behavioural terms (219-390).

II 4. i) Melion is reunited with Arthur. This marks the beginning of his return to social fulfilment. He is, nonetheless, still a wolf in appearance, although not in behaviour (391-485).

ii) Melion is restored to human form as a result of the confrontation with his wife (486-564).

(D) III Final Situation

Melion, as in the initial situation, is socially integrated through his relationship with Arthur, a member of the Arthurian court and an active knight. There is, however, no restoration of his relationship with his wife, therefore, just as at the beginning he is lacking fulfilment in love (565-90).

The structure of the narrative in Melion is tightly composed through a series of parallels and reversals, which highlight the changes in Melion's social and personal relationships and the interaction between the two. Thus it is because of Melion's yearning for love that he first leaves Arthur's court. Parallel with this is the gesture of love that Melion makes to his wife in metamorphosing into a wolf, which has the consequence of forcing him into an existence of extreme social isolation. On both occasions Melion's actions for the sake of love lead him further from the close relationship with Arthur that he has enjoyed initially and to which he will eventually be reconciled. In this way we see that there is an opposition between love and society; the relationship between the two aspects of Melion's life is, however, more complex, as appears if we

consider the lai as being structured in four sections, the first, (A), being repeated in the last, (D), with Melion socially fulfilled in love; the second, (B), and third, (C), sections as opposites of each other - in the second section there is a fusion of personal and social fulfilment for Melion, whereas in the third section he is deprived of both forms of fulfilment equally. The narrative structure appears, then, as based on the interaction between four key episodes, each representing a state of balance/imbalance between forms of social and personal fulfilment and non-fulfilment: -

(A)	Melion: socially fulfilled, lack of fulfilment in love	//	(D)	Melion: socially fulfilled, lack of fulfilment in love
(B)	Melion fulfilled in society and in love	X	(C)	Melion lacking fulfilment in society and in love
(A) (D)	love and society as opposites	X	(B) (C)	love and society combined

If there are similarities in structural terms between Melion's first departure from Arthur's court for the sake of love and his metamorphosis into a wolf, also for the sake of love, there are also significant differences between the episodes. The author makes use of the deer hunt to focus on these, the first deer hunt taking place after Melion has left Arthur's court, the second after he has been married for some time: -

II 1 i	M lacking fulfilment in social terms	X	II 2 ii	M fulfilled in social terms
II 2 i	M goes hunting	//	II 3 i	M goes hunting
	Intervention of princess (first meeting)	//		Intervention of princess (request for deer)
	Melion passive (accepts her offer of love)	X		Melion active (metamorphoses into wolf for sake of love)
II 2 ii	M enjoys fulfilment in love (marriage)	X	II 3 ii	M loses fulfilment in love (betrayal of wife)
	Melion socially fulfilled	X	II 3 iii	Melion loses social fulfilment.

On both occasions the hunt episode brings about a reversal of Melion's position in both personal and social terms. The first hunt is wholly positive in its consequences for Melion, culminating in his marriage. The second hunt, by contrast, is wholly negative in outcome, Melion as a wolf having lost both love and any chance of fulfilment in society. On both occasions, this reversal is brought about by the intervention of the princess. Both hunt episodes are thus cataclysmic for Melion's experiences of social and personal fulfilment, and are crucial in articulating the development of the narrative<sup>29</sup>. The use of this same motif to different effect in different parts of the lai serves as a link between the different episodes. There is a natural break in the narrative after Melion's marriage to the princess, such that this point could easily have been the end of the lai, as simply a story of fulfilment in love; the second hunt propels the story into a new direction as a werewolf story.

Fundamental to both these episodes is the role of the princess as a dynamic force, wholly responsible for the reversals of situation experienced by Melion. In her first intervention in Melion's life she represents a positive force, in the latter, in a complete and unexplained reversal of her character, an entirely negative one. It is from this point that there can be no possibility of a reconciliation between her and Melion, and no chance for him to enjoy fulfilment in love again.

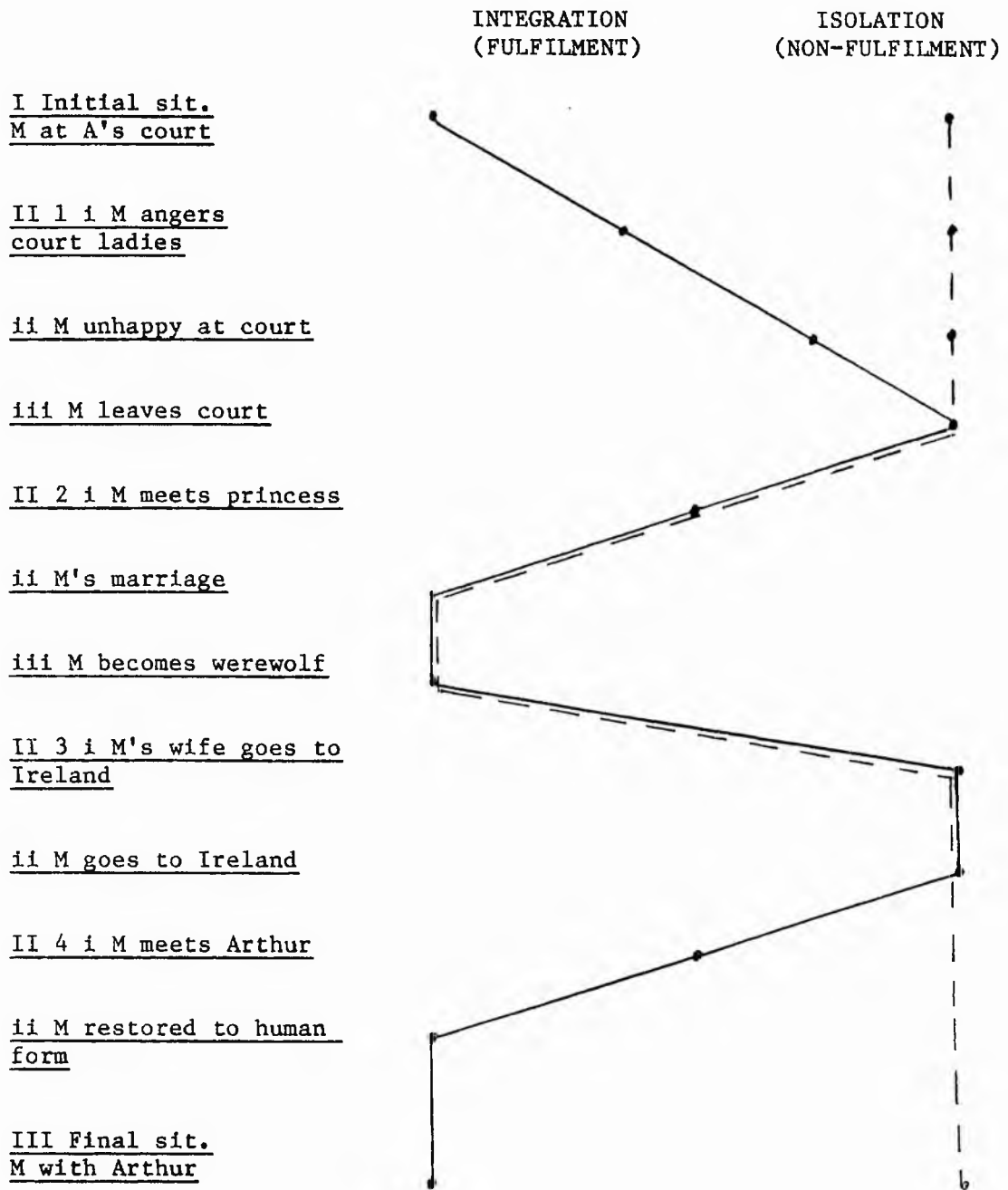
It is, however, possible to see in Melion's relationship with Arthur at the end of the lai a parallel with his love relationship with the princess. This is indicated if we compare the circumstances of Melion's first encounter with the princess and his encounter with



Arthur in Ireland. Both encounters lead Melion to the enjoyment of fulfilment that has previously been missing from his life. On the earlier occasion this appears primarily in terms of personal fulfilment, but his marriage to the princess is also of social significance. Although the more obvious consequences of his encounter with Arthur are to be seen in terms of his social reintegration, there is an important affective dimension to this relationship. Melion can, thus, be seen as falling into two parts, the first culminating in his marriage, the second in the complete restitution of his close relationship with Arthur.

It is from a study of the narrative structure of Melion that we see just how very different it is from Marie's Bisclavret, to which it is often compared because of its subject matter. Melion is a longer and more complex story than Bisclavret, with elements and situations that might appear disparate but which in fact interconnect to form a tightly composed whole.

The following diagram demonstrates how this narrative structure is definable in terms of the developments in Melion's relationships with love and with society: -



Melion's relationship with society ———

Melion and love — — —

### LECHEOR

Lecheor stands apart from all other lais in its subject matter - it is concerned with neither social fulfilment nor with fulfilment in love as such. These aspects of human existence are, so it proclaims, of secondary importance when compared with sexual fulfilment. It is the desire for sexual gratification that is the motivation for all endeavours, whether in personal or social relationships.

It is unusual also in its form, less of a narrative than an exposition of how a lai is composed. In its parodic intention it points to the preciousness of the doctrine of courtly love which asserts that it is fulfilment in love that is the motive for all good behaviour. Thus it is through parody of the subjects that are treated seriously in the other lais that it is related to them.

#### I Initial Situation

Knights and ladies are gathered for the feast of Saint Pantheleon in order to tell stories. This provides the setting for the lady's monologue (1-58).

II The lady's monologue on the fact that all that men do is for the sake of sexual gratification (59-102).

#### III Final Situation

The lady's monologue becomes the basis for the composition of a lai (103-22).

The focus in all three parts is on the monologue in part two, the other two parts serve simply as a frame to this, a dressing to make the text into the superficial form of a narrative, this does not,

however, conceal the true purpose of the lai which is a lighthearted piece of didactic writing - the exposition of a theory presented in the monologue with the other parts as little more than a prologue and an epilogue.

### NABARET

This is far more of an anecdote than a narrative lai in the full sense. As such it is in the same genre as the lais Cor and Mantel, in which there is no real development pursued through the story. Here too the central relationship, between the husband and wife, undergoes no change. The circumstances of the story serve only to highlight the nature of this relationship, which although far from being a model of good marriage will presumably continue as it is.

#### I Initial Situation

The couple are married (3-11).

II 1. The husband complains of the wife's excessive vanity to her family, wanting her to change her ways and so improve their relationship (12-31).

II 2. The wife retaliates by mocking her husband (32-40).

#### III Final Situation

Both the husband and the wife have opened themselves to justified criticism and mockery for their relationship. Nothing, however, has changed in the relationship itself (41-45).

For so static a lai it is irrelevant to consider it in terms of a narrative structure. None the less basic to it is the concept of marriage both as a personal relationship and as a social institution, lightheartedly presenting an image of a far from satisfactory union. Thus in subject matter at least it merits to be placed alongside the other lais, which also take as their basis the social and personal implications of matrimony<sup>30</sup>.

### TYOLET

This lai falls into two very clearly distinct parts, the first tracing Tyolet's experiences towards integration in the society of the Arthurian court; the second developing this as he earns himself a reputation of excellence in the court, thereby also winning the princess's hand in marriage - a balance, therefore, of social and personal fulfilment achieved by the end of the lai.

#### I Initial Situation

Tyolet is in extreme isolation from society, living in the forest, possibly in the Other World, with only his mother for company. Unaware of his own identity as the son of a knight he has no knowledge of the world of chivalry or of the nature of his own rightful place within such society (37-75).

II 1. i) Tyolet goes hunting and meets the knight who explains to him the nature of chivalry (75-212).

ii) Tyolet decides to become a knight (213-46).

iii) Tyolet's mother provides him with the armour to become a knight

(247-76).

iv) Tyolet goes to Arthur's court (277-80).

v) Arthur welcomes Tyolet and knights him (281-320).

Thus from initial social isolation Tyolet has advanced through a series of distinct stages towards social fulfilment within the Arthurian court.

II 2. i) The proud princess comes to court in search of a husband (321-70).

ii) Lodoer having failed in his attempt at the hunt of the stag with the white hoof, Tyolet then undertakes the quest and succeeds (Lodoer's failure enhancing the value of Tyolet's own success) (371-410).

iii) Tyolet is wounded by the lions (485-88).

iv) The bad knight takes the stag's foot and leaves Tyolet for dead (489-532).

v) Tyolet is found by Gauvain and restored to health (533-620).

vi) Tyolet returns to Arthur's court where he is welcomed and acclaimed for his exploit (621-95).

vii) Tyolet marries the haughty princess, the reward for his exploit (696-701).

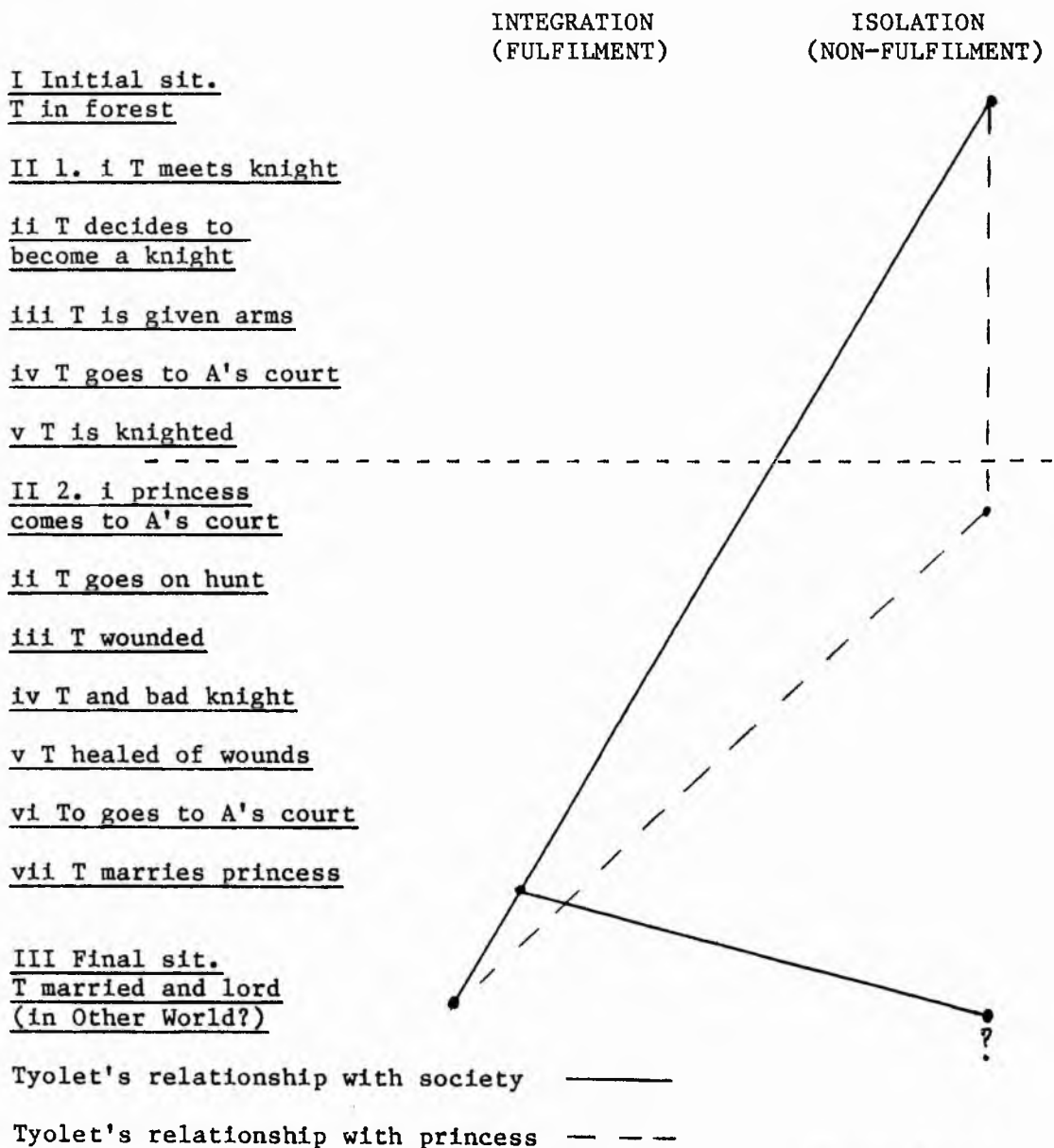
### III Final Situation

Tyolet happily married and established as lord of his wife's lands. It is possible that this country is in fact in the Other World, so this does not necessarily represent social and personal fulfilment in the conventional sense (702-03).

The two parts of the lai could apparently stand autonomously, the former as a story concerned solely with a man's efforts towards social fulfilment; the latter as the story of his successfully completing a marriage trial. The second part is, nonetheless, the natural continuation from the first part, allowing Tyolet to achieve a balance of social fulfilment that does not exist at the end of the first part. The emphasis in this lai - as has been indicated in previous chapters - is above all on Tyolet's success in social terms; this applies as much in the second section as in the first, even his marriage is presented more as a reward for chivalric prowess than as a love match<sup>31</sup>. If at the end of the first section Tyolet has established his right to be a member of the Arthurian court, it is on the grounds primarily of his identity as the son of a knight. It is only at the end of the lai as a whole that he has earned his position in the court by virtue of his deeds. The second half, thus, completes Tyolet's passage towards social fulfilment as well as introducing a personal dimension to exist in balance with it<sup>32</sup>. Thus we can see the narrative in terms of a simple, coherent linear development tracing Tyolet's development from non-fulfilment to fulfilment.

We note in particular the use of the motif of the hunt as a link between the two sections. In both sections it is the fact of undertaking a hunt that is crucial for Tyolet's development towards

his ultimate fulfilment. It is the first hunt that leads him to his encounter with the knight, who metamorphoses from the stag that Tyolet has been pursuing. It is the second hunt, for the stag with the white hoof, that is the means to his winning the princess in marriage. In both cases, therefore, the hunt allows Tyolet - directly or indirectly - to achieve a greater degree of fulfilment, social and/or personal, than he has previously had a chance of enjoying. This double use of the motif of the hunt serves to indicate the relationship between the two sections of the lai, a relationship, which, we have seen, is clearly established in other ways also<sup>33</sup>.





### TYDOREL

Tydorel appears to be a bi-partite lai, the first section telling the story of the love relationship between the Queen and the knight from the Other World, finishing with the severance of the relationship when the knight disappears forever from the Real World; the second section tracing Tydorel's development from birth to his departure to the Other World<sup>34</sup>. The love story is, however, very clearly subsidiary to that of Tydorel, who is, after all, the eponymous hero of the lai. The real purpose of the love relationship is indeed to establish Tydorel's identity as the son of a mortal mother and supernatural father; it is because of this mixed parentage that, although he may achieve a considerable degree of fulfilment within the feudal society of the Real World, it is ultimately only in the Other World that he can wholly fulfil his identity. Thus from the beginning of the lai - the story of his parents' relationship - the final solution is already anticipated.

#### I Initial Situation

The Queen is presented in terms of her childless marriage (4-20)

II 1. i) The knight comes to the Queen and offers her his love (21-156).

ii) The relationship between the Queen and the knight, leading to the birth of Tydorel (157-96).

iii) The ending of the love relationship, after the lovers have been seen by the wounded knight and the lover returns to the Other World (197-218).

The fact that there is so little explanation for the abrupt conclus-

ion of the relationship makes evident the fact that its sole purpose within the structure of the whole is for the conception of Tydorel.

II 2. i) Tydorel grows up to be the King of Brittany as the apparent son and heir of his mother's husband. Because he never sleeps or closes his eyes, Tydorel, even at this stage, cannot be fully integrated into the Real World (219-94).

ii) Tydorel discovers that he is not fully human from the young boy who refuses to tell him a story (295-338).

iii) Tydorel discovers the truth of his father's identity from his mother (339-474).

iv) Tydorel seeks to fulfil his destiny as his father's son, by leaving the Real World (475-84).

### III Final Situation

Tydorel is permanently in the Other World, which is his natural environment (485-88).

In emphasising the importance of Tydorel as the central figure in the lai as a whole, we see that the narrative structure is coherent and straightforward, tracing his destiny from pre-conception to ultimate fulfilment in the Other World. It is for this reason that the love relationship leads nowhere beyond his birth, for in itself it is irrelevant, but it is clearly not a loose end left untied in the narrative as it has served its role in allowing the fulfilment of Tydorel<sup>35</sup>.



ESPINE

In this lai there are two patterns traced through the narrative structure, one corresponding to the development of the relationship between the young lovers, the other corresponding to the development of the young man's relationship with society. Initially these appear in opposition with fulfilment in love and fulfilment in society as mutually exclusive. Ultimately, however, there is a fusion of the two in the marriage of the young couple, a marriage that is only possible after the young man has established his chivalric reputation in his defeat of the knights at the Gué de l'Espine. The narrative with its particular focus on the experiences of the young man, from pre-knighthood to affirmed success as a knight, appears, then, as primarily concerned with tracing his development from childhood to adulthood. It is finally through his experiences at the Gué de l'Espine that he attains maturity. The particular importance of the Gué de l'Espine is indicated not only in the title, but also within the text: -

De l'aventure que dit ai,  
li Breton en fisent un lai  
por chou qu'elë avint      au gué  
n'ont pas li Breton esgardé  
que li lais recheüst son non,  
ne fu se de l'Espine non.  
Ne l'ont pas des enfans nomé,  
ains l'ont de l'Espine apielé,  
s'a a non li lais de l'Espine

Espine 503-11

This specific emphasis on the adventure of the Gué de l'Espine focuses upon its importance as a catalyst within the narrative structure. It acquires the significance of a rite of passage, proving that the young man has moved from his initial immaturity (evidenced by his having no desire to achieve social fulfilment) to maturity. It is only once he has done this that he can overcome the opposition between social and personal fulfilment and be worthy of

achieving absolute and unrestricted fulfilment in both as perfect equilibrium.

### I Initial Situation

The young couple are fulfilled in their love for each other, but with no interest in participating in society (15-69).

II 1. The lovers are separated by their parents, and suffer greatly from the loss of fulfilment in love that they initially enjoyed. It is specifically because he can no longer enjoy such personal fulfilment that the knight seeks to achieve fulfilment in social terms, through an active life as a knight (70-306).

II 2. The adventure at the Gué de l'Espine. The young man proves his skills as a knight in defeating the three knights from the Other World. He is reunited here with his mistress. It is made clear that in defeating the forces of the Other World the young man has established his worthiness to enjoy fulfilment in love and in society (307-470).

### III Final Situation

The royal court recognises and celebrates the young man's worth: he is rewarded for his success at the Gué de l'Espine by this society, his love relationship with the young girl sanctioned by it through marriage, which represents a fusion of personal and social fulfilment (471-512).

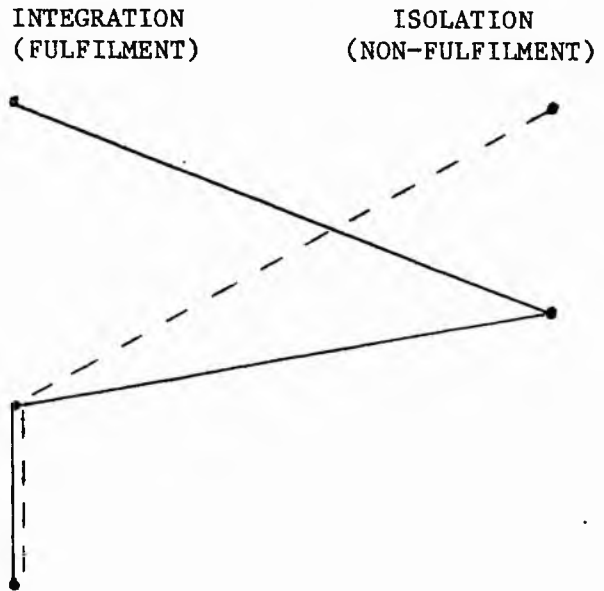
The importance through the lai of the relationship between love and society as one of opposition that is finally overcome is demonstrated in the following diagram: -

I Initial sit.  
relationship between  
boy and girl

II 1 boy learns to be  
a knight  
he is separated from girl

II 2 adventure of the  
Qué de l'Espine

III Final sit.  
marriage of couple



Hero's relationship with girl ———

Hero's relationship with society — — —

### EPERVIER

The central episode of the lai, from which it derives its title, is of an anecdotal character, intended to be more amusing than didactic or significant in structural terms. The structure of the narrative as a whole is defined by changes both in the relationship between Ventilas and his mistress and those of each of them with the husband. Much of the emphasis is on the contrast between the reality of the relationship between Ventilas and the lady and the way in which the husband perceives their relationship. It is in this that the humour of the lai is to be found, an ironic humour.

### I Initial Situation

Ventilas and neighbour as friends, the neighbour apparently happily married to the lady (11-42).

II 1. 1) Ventilas loves the lady but there is no relationship

between them. The husband, without justification, suspects them, however, of having an affair (43-76).

ii) In reaction to the husband's unfounded jealousy, Ventilas and the lady enter into a love relationship which is concealed from the husband (77-93).

## II 2. The Episode of the Lost Sparrowhawk

i) The husband comes to the house when Ventilas and his mistress are together for an illicit tryst (94-166).

ii) To conceal the truth of their relationship, the lady invents the story of the lost sparrowhawk. She succeeds in deceiving her husband, making him believe that her relationship with Ventilas is completely innocent (167-221).

## III Final Situation

The marriage between the lady and her husband continues as before, so does the friendship between the husband and Ventilas, while, unsuspected, Ventilas and the wife continue in their adultery (222-24).

The incident of the 'lost sparrowhawk' does nothing to alter the situation in this triangle of relationships, although enabling the wife to divert his suspicions away from her relationship with Ventilas. The episode in itself is to be found in various folklore traditions. The author of Epervier, despite retaining its essential anecdotal quality, has expanded it into a wider narrative by exploiting the motif of false knowledge as a narrative device to endow the lai as a whole with a degree of coherence, as different

parts of it are related through a pattern of parallelism: -

II 1. i SITUATION: Ventilas and lady in an innocent relationship



HUSBAND'S FALSE INTERPRETATION: He believes them to be involved in an illicit affair/



II 2. 1 SITUATION: Ventilas and lady in illicit affair



II 2 ii HUSBAND'S FALSE INTERPRETATION: He believes their relationship to be innocent

In both cases there is a contrast between the reality of the relationship between Ventilas and the lady and the husband's perception of it. This places the two episodes in a relationship of parallelism. There is, however, also, a reversal from the first situation as the innocent relationship has become an adulterous affair. Through this pattern of parallel and reversal the author has, out of a simple anecdote, composed a story which to some degree works as a coherent narrative. Central to this narrative as a whole are the three relationships as they evolve and as they are, or appear to be fulfilled.



From this study of the narrative structure of the *lais* we can see the extent to which each *lai* can be considered in terms of forms of social and personal fulfilment and non-fulfilment. Having seen in the previous chapters how these can be defined, here we see how the different forms of fulfilment/non-fulfilment interact to form the basis of the narrative whole.

Clearly the concept of narrative structure does not have an identical significance in all the *lais*. The term 'narrative' *lais* serves to distinguish them from lyric *lais*, but in some of these narrative *lais* the actual narrative structure is very slight and appears only as a framework that is not integral to the significance of the text. This is particularly the case for those *lais* which are primarily didactic in intention, such as Oiselet, Trot and Conseil. It applies also to those *lais* that are anecdotal, presented lightly, such as Epervier, Cor and Mantel. These *lais* appear as essentially static, with little or no actual development in the story, no change wrought by the experiences recounted from the initial to the final situation. Yet these *lais*, as we have seen, cannot be considered as wholly static. With the focus on the exposition of a message or moral it is this rather than action that is the basis of the development. Lorois, in Trot, may return to the same court society that he first left, physically unchanged and unchanged in terms of social and personal relationships. He has, however, learnt of the consequences of good and bad attitudes to love. Because there is no other, material, development in the narrative it is this concept of love, with its emphasis on fulfilment in love as something that can be actively merited, that is highlighted. Similarly in Cor and Mantel, the development lies in the discovery by the court in general of the degeneracy of the

standards of moral behaviour that have been prevalent for an undefined period of time.

It is by appreciating that for none of the *lais* is there a narrative structure that is wholly without movement or wholly circular, that we are able to focus on the true point of importance in the *lai*. Even in those apparently static *lais*, the essence of the tale is definable in terms of some or other form of social or personal fulfilment/non-fulfilment. Nabaret, for instance, is basically a consideration of the nature of good/bad marriage; Trot, Cor, Mantel and others offer a consideration of good/bad behaviour in love relationships; Oiselet, uniquely, is wholly concerned with defining social fulfilment/non-fulfilment.

In other *lais*, in which the narrative structure is more complex, we find the focus not on one form of fulfilment but on an interaction between different forms. It is on these patterns of interaction that the structural patterns are based to highlight the significant developments of the story. Many of these structural patterns appear in terms of situations and episodes being placed in relationships with other situations and episodes through the use of parallels and reversals<sup>36</sup>. This allows apparently disparate situations to be linked into a coherent narrative whole. More importantly, in many cases, this use of parallels and reversals focuses upon developments in the social and personal relationships featured in the *lai*. As with the simpler, more anecdotal *lais*, it is through this often that the underlying significance of the *lai* emerges. Thus *lais* that appear to be related in terms of similar subject matter are revealed to be composed in such a way as to have a quite different significance, which is revealed through the structure. This applies

to Melion and Bisclavret, which are often compared; or, for instance, to Graelent, Guingamor, Lanval and Desiré, which all present a similar combination of social and personal relationships, but with, in each case, a different emphasis.

What also appears from an analysis of the *lais* in terms of narrative structure is the importance of the individual<sup>37</sup>. With very few exceptions, the narrative structure in each *lai* is determined by the experiences of a very small number of characters, often, indeed, by the experiences of one character. It is the developments in his relationships - with his mistress, his family, his lord, his vassals and with society in general - that articulate the story. Only in Lecheor, Cor, Mantel and, to a lesser extent, Trot is the focus primarily on the experiences of a social group as a whole, a court in the case of the first three, the groups of ladies in the last. Only in Lecheor is there no individual set significantly apart from the mass; in Cor and Mantel, despite being primarily concerned with presenting the general decadence of the Arthurian court, Caradoc and his mistress/wife are distinguished as individuals; in Trot it is Lorois.

This last chapter confirms what has been indicated in the previous chapters, that the relationship between love (the desires of the individual for personal fulfilment) and society (the demands and expectations imposed upon the individual by society) as presented in the *lais* is rarely a simple one. Often within the same *lai* these two aspects affecting the individual will be shown both in conflict and equilibrium. It is certainly this interaction between forms of social fulfilment/non-fulfilment and forms of personal fulfilment/non-fulfilment that is the basis of the majority of the stories; the

different authors presenting in similar or diverse ways means by which an ideal balance can be achieved or the consequences of an imbalance. It is this above all that emerges from such an analysis of the *lais*, demonstrating the fundamental importance of the notions of social and personal fulfilment/non-fulfilment in these texts.

It is certainly also evident that, however different the *lais* may be from each other in structural terms, they are for the most part composed with a high degree of self-conscious craft to function as coherent narrative entities, with often very few situations or details that are gratuitous and that fail to contribute in some way to an understanding of the *lai* as a whole. This applies equally to the shorter and the longer *lais*.

An analysis of the *lais* based on such terms of fulfilment/non-fulfilment seems, then, to be validated as a means to a deeper understanding of the *lais*. This is not, however, to dismiss the value of other studies of the narrative structure of the *lais*, based on other terms<sup>38</sup>. Such studies as exist allow attention to be drawn to other aspects of the *lais* than are revealed from this particular analysis of narrative structure. Often, however, they are applied only to a particular number of *lais*, whereas, as we have seen, it is possible to define the narrative structure of every *lai* in terms of social and personal fulfilment/non-fulfilment.

Chapter Six: Footnotes

- 1 (P.455) G.V. Smithers: 'Story-patterns in some Breton Lays'.

G. V. Smithers considers three basic types of structural pattern to be found in some of the lais as well as in other stories. These are defined simply in terms of the love relationship between the hero (mortal) and heroine (fairy).

Lucy Allen Paton: Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance.

see p.1. Although it is something of a simplification Paton is right to emphasise the importance of the hero as a central figure in the patterns of narrative structure.

A Breton lay or Arthurian romance consists essentially in the glorification of a single hero, and its incidents are strung, one after the other, upon the thread of his individual prowess. p.1

She also stresses the role played within the structure by the fairy mistress in providing the hero with the opportunity for fulfilment in love.

Although the fairy's place in the narrative is really secondary to the hero's, she is a highly important element in the structure of Arthurian romance. p.1

We see, however, that the structure of the lais is very rarely defined simply in terms of the relationship between these two characters.

Thomas D. Watts Jr. and Raymond J. Cormier: 'Toward an Analysis of Certain Lais of Marie de France'.

Judith Rice Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the 'Lais of Marie de France: Themes and Variations, vol.I.  
see p.15.

Lise Lawson: 'La Structure du récit dans les Lais de Marie de France'.

see pp.233-34; 240. Lawson in her study places emphasis on the relationship between the need for happiness in love and the need for success in society as the basis for narrative structure in Marie's lais.

- 2 (p.457) Pierre Jonin: 'Merveilleux et voyage dans le lai de Guigemar'.

Le merveilleux a été la force motrice qui a lancé directement le conte dans l'aventure. p.284

- 3 (p.459) Antoinette Saly: 'Observations sur le lai de Guigemar'.  
see pp.337-38.

- 4 (p.465) Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France.  
see p.48.

- 5 (p.467) Emanuel J. Mickel Jr.: 'Marie de France's Use of Irony as a Stylistic and Narrative Device'.

see pp.272-73. Mickel focuses on Marie's use of irony as a narrative device here, in the fact that it is as a result of their renunciation of their relationship that Gurun and Fresne are finally able to find complete fulfilment in it.

- 6 (p.470) Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France,  
see pp.113-14.

- 7 (p.470) Ibid.

see pp.133-35. Rothschild stresses the justice of the final situation, and Bisclavret's felicity in the intimacy of the relationship he enjoys with the King, which more than compensates for the loss of his wife.

Bisclavret is restored to the same feudal state as he has at the beginning of his story. In fact, he is given even more than before. p.135.

The King has assumed the role that Bisclavret's wife refused, in that he has given him the understanding of his nature, the courtesy and tenderness which she could not. pp.133-34.

M. Faure: 'Le Bisclavret de Marie de France, une histoire suspecte de loup-garou'.

see pp.349-52. M Faure also sees the final situation in positive terms with Bisclavret's relationship with the King as a substitute for the lost relationship with his wife. The King appears as a parental figure in contrast to Bisclavret's wife who is a figure of sensuality and depravity. It is just that she should be disfigured, henceforth to bear the mark of the devil upon her. Bisclavret's relationship with the King at the end of the lai appears, then, as an escape from depravity and a return to order. M.Faure derives from Bisclavret the moral whereby the stability of relationships, particularly feudal relationships is exalted.

Le roi incarne, comme on s'y attend, le pouvoir civil et religieux, mais il semble étendre ici sa domination sur la forêt elle-même, c'est-à-dire sur la nature entière. Le Bisclavret est poussé vers lui par un besoin de sécurité fondamental; un examen rapide révèle à quel point le vocabulaire de la féodalité peut traduire la nostalgie de protection parentale. p.350

Se vêtir c'est renoncer à un état primitif, proche de la nature; c'est renoncer à la sensualité et à la sexualité sauvages des loup-garous. Même la sexualité permise, celle du mariage, lui semble refusée puisque sa femme est chassée du royaume. p.351

Les relations d'interdépendance sont génératrices d'ordre, et le cas du chevalier loup-garou servira d'exemple aux autres barons. p.352

Edgard Sienaert: Les Lais de Marie de France du conte merveilleux à la nouvelle psychologique.

see p.92. Sienaert stresses the positive qualities of the ending with the close relationship between Bisclavret and the King: -

C'est cet amour réciproque qui vaincra et c'est cette victoire de l'amour sur l'infidélité en amour qui est le thème du lai. p.92

Lawson: 'La Structure du récit dans les Lais de Marie de France'.

see p.239. Lawson, although noting that Bisclavret is restored in most ways to the situation he initially enjoyed, focuses on the loss of love fulfilment in his life.

Dans Bisclavret, le loup-garou est débarrassé de son épouse infidèle et traîtresse, et il demeure seul et sans amour. p.239

For her this loss of love - she makes no mention of the compensatory quality of the King's love - is fundamental in determining the tone of end of the lai as: -

un dénouement plus ou moins triste. p.239

- 8 (p.472) Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France.

Why does Marie choose banishment as the punishment for the guilty pair of lovers? One reason could be that they had sought to banish, with more horrible consequences, the husband. Thus, just as in Equitan, where also the wife betrays her good husband with a lover and seeks to rid herself of him, the guilty pair would be made to suffer a similar fate to the one they had intended for the husband. pp.135-36

- 9 (p.472) Emanuel J. Mickel Jr.: 'A Reconsideration of the Lais of Marie de France'.

The woman in Bisclavret acts purely from selfish motives. Her uncharitable act robs the knight of his human form and condemns him to a bestial existence. The punishment which she receives at the end of the story seems to have little to do with her adultery; rather it stems from her inhuman selfishness, the cupidinous nature of her love, and her cruelly uncharitable action toward her husband. p.51

Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France  
see p.124.

François Suard: 'Bisclavret et les contes du loup-garou: essai d'interprétation'.

see p.274.

- 10 (p.473) Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France.

see p.118. Rothschild points to the fact that no description is offered of the knight's physical appearance other than his clothes: -

the result of mentioning the lover's clothing is as if he were a faceless man, all dressed up. p.118

- 11 (p.483) John Stevens: 'The granz biens of Marie de France'.

see p.16. Stevens is surely being too harsh on Arthur and the court for their behaviour in the trial episode, criticising them for the slowness of the legal procedure. He dismisses the trial and the emphasis on the legal technicalities as being of little importance within the lai. In so doing, he reveals that he has failed to appreciate the stress on that is presented between the behaviour of the King and the court in this episode and at the beginning of the lai. He, thus, undermines the significance of Lanval's opting for fulfilment in love rather than fulfilment in society.

- 12 (p.487) W.T.H. Jackson: 'The Arthuricity of Marie de France'.  
see pp.11-12.

There can be little doubt that Marie sets up a deliberate contrast between Guenevere's crass offer and the behaviour of Lanval's lover. p.12

- 13 (p.491) Mickel: 'Marie de France's Use of Irony as a Stylistic and Narrative Device'.  
see pp.277; 281; 287.

- 14 (p.504) Jacques Ribard: 'Le Lai d'Eliduc: étude thématique'.

see p.297. Ribard stresses the importance of what he calls 'la dualité' or 'la duplicité' with the emphasis on its etymological sense.

Tout le poème en effet est sous le signe du chiffre deux.  
p.297

- 15 (p.506) Mickel: 'Marie de France's Use of Irony as a Stylistic and Narrative Device.'

see pp.272-73. Mickel points to the irony whereby it is precisely at the time when Eliduc has renounced all hope of fulfilment in his love for Guilliadun that the way is opened to his achieving it.

- 16 (p.507) Ribard: 'Le Lai d'Eliduc: étude thématique'.  
see pp.298-99

Eliduc, cette figure de l'homme, a trouvé enfin la paix dans une fidélité plus haute où les amours terrestres et divisés viennent se fondre dans l'unique amour de Dieu. p.299

Le chiffre deux, ce symbole de l'imperfection humaine, va comme se fondre dans l'unité retrouvée et l'apparente séparation de l'homme et des deux femmes sera bientôt dépassée dans une forme d'union supérieure toute spirituelle qu'évoque le jeu sur priouent (v. 1171) et



repreiot (v.1173). Les deux femmes sont désormais ensemble, unies et réunies - comme le laissait sans doute présager la similitude même de leurs noms - et avec Eliduc une sorte de trinité parfaite. p.298

- 17 (p.528) Yves Lefèvre: 'La Femme au Moyen Age en France dans la vie littéraire et spirituelle'.

L'Histoire est charmante. Elle eut grand succès. N'est-elle pas symbolique des progrès rapides et considérables que la femme avait faits dans la pensée du Moyen Age? On peut parler même, dans bien des cas et dans biens des domaines, d'une véritable primauté. La grâce féminine l'a emporté sur la clergie grondeuse. p.124

- 18 (p.528) Henri D'Andeli: Le Lai d'Aristote ed. Maurice Delbouille.

see pp.16-21. Delbouille comments on Henri D'Andeli's attempts to create a lai out of a subject matter that is more suited to a fabliau: -

En dépit de ses précautions et de ses commentaires, c'est d'ailleurs bien comme tel que son poème fut reçu par le public du temps, qui ne semble guère avoir tenu compte des intentions courtoises affichées tout au long de l'oeuvre mais en a fort apprécié la portée comique, y a parfois vu une leçon de misogynie et a même cru y discerner des desseins déplaisants à l'adresse du monde 'clérical'. p.18

see pp.54-56. The source seems very clearly to be an Arabic story attributed to Al Gahie, with which it has close similarities.

- 19 (p.539) Ernest Hoepffner: 'The Breton Lais'.

see p.113. Hoepffner suggests that the Lai du Cor is the oldest surviving lai, dating from the third quarter of the twelfth century. This hypothesis is based on its archaic forms of versification and its presentation of the Arthurian court.

see p.116. He suggests a dating of several decades later for Mantel.

Emmanuel Baumgartner: 'A Propos du Mantel Mautaillié'.

see p.323. Baumgartner suggests a dating for Mantel of shortly before 1200.

- 20 (p.541) M.M. Pelan and N.C.W. Spence edd: Narcisus: Poème du XIIe siècle.

see pp. 28-32. In their introduction, although pointing to the evidence of the close and accurate knowledge of Ovid's tale by the Old French author, Pelan and Spence particularly stress his modifications and expansions from this Ovidian source.

Martine Thiry-Stassin and Madeleine Tyssens edd.: Narcisse: Conte Ovidien français du XIIe siècle.

le Narcisse a été écrit par un poète connaissant avec précision Ovide. p.56

L'auteur du Narcisse est redevable à Ovide de sa matière, la façon de la rendre a été fixée, pour une partie de ses éléments par l'exemple de l'Enéas ou de Piramus et Tisbé et par l'école et son enseignement rhétorique. On doit à l'anonyme la cohérence - qui s'exprime par la mise au goût du jour, la recreation des personnages, la restructuration du conte - et l'aspect fini qui fait le charme de l'oeuvre. p.61

Marie-Noëlle Lefay-Toury: La Tentation du suicide dans le roman français du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle.  
see pp.57-82.

- 21 (p.545) Lefay-Toury: La Tentation du suicide dans le roman français du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle.

Le discours des amants suit comme le récit, la même progression que l'amour/douleur vers la mort. Mais il y a plus encore, dans le discours, que ce caractère progressif; il existe un véritable paradigme sémantique et rhétorique de l'amour et de la mort qui se révèle dès le début du poème dans les associations ou les oppositions isotopiques. p.22

- 22 (p.549) Lucien Foulet: 'Marie de France et les lais bretons'.

see p.37. Foulet is particularly critical of the inclusion of gratuitous detail in Desiré.

L'histoire qui fait le fond de son lai est encore celle de Lanval, mais il l'a renouvelée par des détails généralement peu heureux. p.37

- 23 (p.554) Jean Subrenat: 'L'Aveu du secret d'amour dans Le Lai de Désiré'.

Il convient de se demander si, dans une certaine mesure, le thème du lai de Désiré n'est pas prétexte à poser un problème de morale pratique ou de théologie appliquée. p.374

- 24 (p.555) Ibid.  
see pp. 373-74

- 25 (P.555) Mireille Guillet-Rydell: 'Nature et rôle du mariage dans les lais anonymes bretons'.

see p.97. The importance of marriage in Desiré is indicated through the structure, the lai begins with a marital situation (Desiré's parents) and culminates in the marriage of Desiré and the fairy.

- 26 (p.560) François Suard: 'Le Projet narratif dans Lanval, Graelent et Guingamor .  
see p.360.

- 27 (p.565) Stevens: 'The granz biens of Marie de France'.

see pp.12-14. The narrative of Guingamor is dismissed as being: -

an imaginative and emotional jumble. p.12

R.N. Illingworth: 'The Composition of Graelent and Guingamor.  
see p.42.

It seems, therefore, that the main plot of GN consists of two stories which have been placed end to end and imperfectly joined. p.42

- 28 (p.573) William C. Stokoe Jr.: 'The Sources of Sir Launfal :  
Lanval and Graelent :

Even in a summary this story preserves a coherence and unity of action hardly to be expected from a patchwork of plagiarized bits or an unskillful mixing of motifs. pp.395-96

- 29 (p.585) Marcelle Thiébaux: The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature.  
see pp.18-19,

- 30 (p.590) Gertrude Schoepperle: 'The Old French Lai de Nabaret '.  
see p.291

- 31 (p.592) Paton: Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance.  
see p.174.

- 32 (p.592) Roger Dubuis: Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles et la tradition de la nouvelle en France au moyen âge.

see p.426. Dubuis is surely too harsh in his criticism of Tyolet for: -

son manque flagrant d'unité. p.426

Herman Braet: Deux lais féeriques bretons.

see p.65. Braet defends the coherence of the narrative of Tyolet: -

La première partie du lai est donc intimement liée à la seconde: la victoire de Tyolet est préparée par tout ce qui précède et le met à son tour en valeur. p.65

- 33 (p.593) Thiébaux: The Stag of Love.  
see pp.18-19.

Herman Braet: 'Tyolet/Perceval: The Father Quest'.

The first hunt, which actually was a failure, also points - inversely - to the final one, where a woman is at stake. In this way, the victory gained over the fairy creature could be interpreted both as the consummation of the hero's struggle for self-assertion and as an Oedipian solution: on both accounts, as a victory over the father figure. p.306

- 34 (p.594) Ernest Hoepffner: 'Marie de France et les lais anonymes'.

see pp.23-29. Hoepffner stresses the similarity between Tydorel and Yonec, suggesting that Tydorel was based on Yonec.

- 35 (p.595) Dubuis: Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles et la tradition de la nouvelle en France au moyen âge.

pp.430-431, Dubuis is, nonetheless, to some extent justified in his comments on Tydorel:-

Il serait toutefois abusif, dans le cas de Tydorel, de parler de construction systématique ou de conception artistique. L'auteur commet, par ailleurs, trop de fautes pour que l'on puisse penser qu'il a des prétensions esthétiques. pp 430-31

- 36 (p.603) S. Foster Damon: 'Marie de France: Psychologist of Courtly Love'.

see pp.972-74. Damon points to Marie's use of parallelism to link situations and themes in different lais.

Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France. see p.17. Rothschild has also drawn attention to the use of parallels in the structure of the lais.

- 37 (p.604) Robert Hanning: The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance.

Although Hanning's analysis focuses on the romances, many of his conclusions apply equally to the lais.

The hero's discovery of his identity and his destiny (they are two aspects of the same phenomenon) is an act of individual realization. p.60

In the romance genre generally, man is defined in terms of becoming, not being; that is, what he is is a function of what time brings him. p.139

The passage of time brings discovery, recovery, truth. But if time shapes man, man shapes time: it is the individual life at the centre of a romance which gives to time the meaning it has. p.139

- 38 (p.605) Mary Virginia Allen: The Literary Craftsmanship of Marie de France.

see Chapter three, 'Narrative Art'.

Jean Frappier: 'Remarques sur la structure du lai, essai de définition et de classement'.

Frappier considers structure in the lais as defined through an interplay of the Real World and the Other World.

G.V. Smithers: 'Story-patterns in some Breton Lays'.

J.-Ch. Payen: 'Structure et sens d'Yonec'.

Sara Sturm: The Lai of Guingamor: Study.

Jacques Ribard: 'Le Lai du Laostic: structure et signification'

B. L. Honeycutt: 'The Interaction, Description and Symbol in Yonec of Marie de France'.

Rothschild: Narrative Technique in the Lais of Marie de France.

Rupert T. Pickens: 'Thematic Structure in Marie de France's Guigemar'.

J.-Ch. Payen: 'Le Lai narratif'.

see pp.48-49. Jean-Charles Payen's analysis of the structure of the lais is widely applicable, but the terms are so general as to undermine its significance.

Dubuis: Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles et la tradition de la nouvelle en France au moyen âge.

see II 7 and 8. Dubuis distinguishes between what he calls 'lais simples' and 'lais élaborés'.

## CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this study it is evident that no overriding definition of the *lais* as a whole can be offered. It is, however, the diversity of these texts - fairy stories, love stories, quest stories, anecdotes, didactic texts - that allows the essential concern, common to all of them, to emerge. They all, in different ways, focus on the individual and his destiny as defined through his personal and social relations. The individual as hero or heroine of the *lai* may be an idealisation - model knight, the most beautiful woman in the world - he/she, nonetheless, represents a figure to be empathised with by the contemporary public. Even in those *lais* ostensibly set in a distant historical past of Antiquity or the time of the Arthurian court, it is twelfth-century feudal society that is portrayed. More specifically it is as a product of the chivalric class that the individual is presented in the *lais*. This social setting defines to a large extent the rights and obligations by which the individual must live, the role that is his to fulfil in that society. The fulfilment of that role is an integral part of the fulfilment of his identity: the individual cannot be isolated by his socially defined identity. The protagonists of the *lais* are faced with the realisation of this repeatedly through their experiences in the stories.

The relationship between the individual and society is frequently expressed through the particular relationship of vassal and lord. Through this, the fundamental characteristics of the relationship between man and society are presented, with an emphasis on the bond of reciprocity: the ideal social relationship is one which is experienced as of equal benefit to both sides. The advantages of

interdependence are not only of material significance, although it is in such terms of the exchange of material rewards for active physical services that the feudal relationship is founded. The bond, ideally is also one of love, more important than that of obligation, so that the relationship is a source not only of social fulfilment but also of personal fulfilment for the individual.

It is the image of this ideal state of interaction between the individual and society that is offered in the *lais*, albeit not always one that is enjoyed by the protagonist. Establishing the ideal of such equilibrium in the relations between the individual and society, the *lais* also confront the sources of conflict between them. When there is a breakdown in the essential bond of reciprocity - however it occurs - the individual becomes oppressed by this relationship with society. In the *lais* only those heroes who depart for an existence of unreality in the Other World can escape from the ties of this relationship. It is precisely through offering such a clearly unreal alternative to certain characters that the *lais* indicate the true impossibility of transcending this relationship. The individual - in the *lais* and in reality - who remains in the Real World, unavoidably remains in a relationship with society. Society - in the form of the king or lord - may withdraw its favours from the individual, but its authority over the individual is still enforced to oblige the individual to live by its standards.

In such cases the individual's relationship with society is experienced by him not as a source of fulfilment but as a source of non-fulfilment. Frequently through the *lais*, the heroes and heroines find themselves in this way in conflict with society, as

isolated, alienated figures. Society appears, then, as a negative force, imposing its demands and expectations upon the individual in such a way as to prevent him from achieving happiness in life.

The basis for confronting the issues of the failure of the relationship between the individual and society lies essentially in the recognition that the individual exists not only in terms of his social identity. The consequences of a conflict between the individual and society are experienced not only in social terms - loss of material benefits, loss of social status - but also in personal terms. The individual in the *lais* is presented not only as having social ambitions, keen to excel in the fulfilment of his role in society through deeds of chivalry. He is also an emotional being, with a desire for happiness in love and personal relationships. Ideally his relationship with society should provide him with a degree of personal fulfilment. The hero in the *lais* is, however, dependent upon more private relationships based on sexual love.

In presenting the individual as a being whose needs for personal fulfilment are not wholly to be met through his social relations, the *lais* inevitably confront the possibility of direct opposition between the individual's obligations in society and his desires for fulfilment in love. Thus it is that we find the hero in the *lais* turning aside from his social relationships for the sake of fulfilment in love, a form of fulfilment often achieved only in defiance of the rules of society. All extra-marital relationships, whether pre-marital or adulterous, are inevitably contrary to the standards of society and can, therefore, never be integrated into society. In presenting such situation of conflict between the pressures of society and the personal aspirations of the individual,



the *lais* offer an insight into the issues of concern to a contemporary readership, young noble men and women prevented by their social circumstances from loving freely as their hearts dictated.

The forces of love and society do not, however, appear as wholly irreconcilable opposites in the *lais*. Certainly in many of the stories reconciliation between them is impossible and the individual is either condemned to unhappiness in love or compelled to make the choice of leaving society and the Real World forever in order to have a chance of absolute and unrestricted fulfilment in love. In others, however, a balance of personal fulfilment and fulfilment in social terms is achieved, as a love relationship acquires a significance and justification as a social relationship also. It is in marriage that this fusion is possible: marriage as a love match and as a social institution. This is the ideal proposed by the *lais*; for although much happiness is to be found in other forms of relationships - it is only in such a relationship based on love and sanctioned by society that absolute happiness can be achieved in a way that is permanent. What is stressed in the *lais* is that this consummate felicity achieved in a balance of personal and social fulfilment is attained only through merit. Indeed many of the *lais* are concerned with tracing the development to a state of maturity by an individual which establishes his worthiness for such a degree of fulfilment. In this way all the *lais* appear to an extent as didactic in intention, proposing ideal standards of behaviour as models to be emulated.

In confronting the possible conflicts in the interaction between forms of social and personal fulfilment/non-fulfilment, and in

offering solutions for the overcoming of those conflicts, the *lais* offer both a reflection of reality and an image of fantasy fulfilment of appeal to a contemporary public. The importance of such issues arising from the interaction between love and society for the authors to the *lais* is evident. This can clearly be seen from Chapter Six, in which we see the way in which the patterns of interaction based on conflict and reconciliation are exploited as the basis of the patterns of narrative structure in the *lais* and are thereby highlighted.

Given the diversity of the texts, it would seem certain that such concerns are not peculiar to the *lai* as a genre, which suggests that a similar study of other contemporary forms of literature would yield further insight into the extent to which love and society were considered as reconcilable, or irreconcilable, aspects of existence.

APPENDIX: CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS IN THE LAIS

The following tables give the line numbers for the references to the different qualities attributed to the characters in the lais. These include physical beauty, as well as qualities of character, also such attributes as high birth and reputation, which contribute to the full identity of the characters. I deal first with those epithets applied to the male characters, and separately with those for female characters.

Most of the character descriptions that appear in the lais refer to the main protagonists. In some lais, however, other characters are also described. The references that apply to secondary characters are within round brackets. Square brackets are used to show that the reference is not to a specific epithet, but to a more general indication of the character possessing a certain attribute.

Male	<u>beauté/bel</u>	<u>prouesse/ preux</u>	<u>courtoisie/ courtois</u>	<u>bons chevaliers</u>
Guigemar		(33); 43		55-56
Equitan		(22)	11	(22)
Fresne				
Bisclavret	17		(222)	17
Lanval	22	(6); 22 113; 516	(6); 113 231	
Deus Amanz	58; 82	67; 82	67	
Yonec	(98); 115 463; 517	(98); 426 463	(98); 119	515
Laustic		19		
Milun		19; 298 337	14; 332	13; 297
Chaitivel	36; 153	37; 153	38	
Chievrefoil				
Eliduc	272; 547	6; 272	6; 149 271; 423	
Ignauze	113; 133 589-91 595-96 603 246	24; (40) 114	56; 131	550
Haveloc				
Aristote				
Ombre	108	64-65; 110	64-65	111
Trot				
Vair Palefroi		35; 44; 739 1323; 1325-26	36; 1324	36; 1324
Cort Mantel				
Cor		560	560	
Narcisus	(61-112) 132; 242 250-53 255			
Piramus et Tisbe	6-8			
Desiré	61; 89	89; 196		
Doon		69	70	
Guingamor	13-14 45-46 52-53	12	10	
Graelent	14; 314	27; 294 314	112; 293 314	294
Oiselet			(153)	
Conseil	(74; 87)	(74)	(92); 748	
Amour	13	13		
Melion		7; (13)	7; 10; (13) 47; 432	9 47 (69)
Lecheor				
Nabaret		4	4	
Tyolet	39; 56	(221)	302; (535)	
Tydorel	113 116-17	115; 120 232	223	
Espine	16; 31	16;	16	
Epervier				

Male	<u>largesse/</u> <u>large</u>	<u>despendant</u>	<u>vaillant</u>	<u>hardi</u>	<u>fier</u>
Guigemar			(33)		
Equitan					
Fresne					
Bisclavret					
Lanval	21; [209] 231			516	
Deus Amanz					
Yonec	464	464	98; 426		516
Laustic		[21]			
Milun	[328]; 338	[328]		14 298	14 298
Chaitivel	38; 154	38	37		
Chievrefoil					
Eliduc	272; 548		8	6	6
Ignauze	594				
Haveloc					
Aristote	65				
Ombre				84	
Trot	([12])			8	8
Vair Palefroï					
Cort Mantel					
Cor					
Narcisus					132
Piramus et Tisbé					
Desiré					
Doon	202	[200]	69; 212		
Guingamor	[18-19]				
Graelent	294				
Oiselet					
Conseil			(47)		
Amour					
Melion	(14)				
Lecheur					
Nabaret				4	4
Tyolet		306		40 (221)	40
Tydorel	224	224	223		
Espine					
Epervier					

Male	<u>coragos</u>	<u>forz</u>	<u>sage</u>	<u>franc</u>	<u>sens/ senez</u>	<u>gentil</u>
Guigemar			43			
Equitan						
Fresne						
Bisclavret			(222)	179		
Lanval						3
Deus Amanz			82			
Yonec		516				
Laustic						
Milun				14		
Chaitivel						40
Chievrefoil						
Eliduc			271 348 423		548	
Ignauze				194		
Haveloc		245		255		
Aristote						
Ombre				79 109		
Trot	8					
Vair Palefroi			739		43 152	
Mantel						
Cor						
Narcisus						
Piramus et Tisbé					118	
Desiré						
Doon			70			
Guingamor			10	22	12	
Graelent			293	7 (103)	(102) 112	6
Oiselet					(153)	(23)
Conseil			(47) (108) 748 769		768	
Amour					16	
Melion					46	
Lecheor				(75)		
Nabaret						
Tyolet	40		(527)		303	
Tydorel						
Espine						
Epervier						

Male	<u>enprenant</u>	<u>engingnos</u>	<u>gent</u>	<u>debonere</u>	<u>legier</u>
Guigemar					
Equitan					
Fresne					
Bisclavret				179	
Lanval					
Deus Amanz			58		
Yonec			115		
Laustic					
Milun					
Chaitivel					
Chievrefoil					
Eliduc					
Ignoure			43		
			594		
Haveloc				255	
Aristote					
Ombre				79	109
Trot					
Vair Palefroï					
Cort Mantel					
Cor					
Narcisus			132		
Piramus et Tisbé					
Desiré					
Doon	70				
Guingamor					
Graelent			7		
Oiselet			(65)		
Conseil					
Amour					
Melion					
Lecheor				(75)	
Nabaret					
Tyolet		39			
Tydorel					
Espine					
Epervier					

Male	<u>ireus</u>	<u>isneaus</u>	<u>doz</u>	<u>dansiaus</u>	<u>bunté</u>	<u>leauté</u>
Guigemar						
Equitan						(22)
Fresne						
Bisclavret						
Deus Amanz						
Yonec						
Laustic						
Milun					338	
Chaitivel						
Chievrefoil						
Eliduc						194; 32 (326); 12
Ignauze			597	64	142	
Haveloc						
Aristote						
Ombre	84	109	79			
Trot						
Vair Palefroi					40	
Cort Mantel						
Cor						
Narcisus						
Piramus et Tisbé						
Desiré						
Doon						
Guingamor						
Graelent			103			313
Oiselet					(147)	(148) (154)
Conseil			(92)			
Amour						
Melion					(14)	
Lecheor						
Nabaret						
Tyolet						
Tydorel						
Espine						
Epervier						



Male	<u>hautece</u>	<u>not</u> <u>orgueilleux</u>	<u>bien appris/</u> <u>enseigniez</u>	<u>bien parlant</u>
Guigemar				
Equitan				
Fresne				
Bisclavret				
Lanval			67	
Deus Amanz				
Yonec				
Laustic				
Milun				
Chaitivel				
Chievrefoil				
Eliduc				
Ignoure	23		114;133	
Haveloc				
Aristote				
Ombre				
Trot				
Vair Palefroï	43			
Cort Mantel				
Cor				
Narcisus				
Piramus et Tisbé (3)				
Desiré				
Doon				
Guingamor			22	
Graelent				
Oiselet				
Conseil		111	749	749
Amour				
Melion				
Lecheor				
Nabaret				
Tyolet				
Tydorel				
Espine				
Epervier				

Male	<u>honore</u>	not <u>bourgeois</u> /not <u>vilain</u>	<u>riche</u>	<u>amez/loez</u> (popularity)
Guigemar				44
Equitan				13-14
Fresne				
Bisclavret				
Lanval				
Deus Amanz				
Yonec				517
Laustic				
Milun	20		(125)	19; 25-26
Chaitivel				
Chievrefoil				
Eliduc		576		31; 266
Ignaure			(41)	
Haveloc				
Aristote				
Ombre				107
Trot			7	
Vair Palefroï				
Cort Mantel			(9)	
Cor				
Narcisus				
Piramus				
et Tisbé			(4)	
Desiré	88	144		90
Doon				201; 210
Guingamor				17
Graelent	15	240-41		28
Oiselet			5-7	
Conseil			(65)	
Amour	14		14	15
Melion			(11)	8
Lecheor				
Nabaret			[5]	
Tyolet				
Tydorel				
Espine				
Epervier				

Male	<u>grant pris/ valur</u>	<u>noble</u>	<u>high birth</u>	<u>not ioli</u>	<u>faire/ savoir honor</u>	<u>adroiz</u>
Guigemar	69					
Equitan	13					
Fresne						
Bisclavret		18				
Lanval	21		27; 232		212	
Deus Amanz			58			
Yonec						
Laustic	19				20	
Milun	(125) 300				332	
Chaitivel	39; 154					
Chievrefoil						
Eliduc				422 576		
Ignauze	26					
Haveloc			[17-26]			
Aristote						
Ombre						
Trot						
Vair Palefroi	41-42 56				43	
Cort Mantel						
Cor						504
Narcisus			349			
Piramus et Tisbé			(4)			
Desiré	86-88; 242					
Doon	211					
Guingamor	13					
Graelent			6			
Oiselet						
Conseil						
Amour			15			
Melion	47					
Lecheor						
Nabaret						
Tyolet						
Tydorel						
Espine			27			
Epervier						

Male	<u>fine</u> clothing	<u>no</u> <u>envie</u>	religious	( <u>bon/fin</u> ) <u>cuer</u>	<u>cheri/</u> <u>proisié</u>
Guigemar					
Equitan					
Fresne					
Bisclavret					169
Lanval					
Deus Amanz					
Yonec			[149-64] [184-88]		
Laustic					
Milun					
Chaitivel					
Chievrefoil					
Eliduc			[837-38] [1151-64] [1177-80]		31;266
Ignauze				194;294 597	
Haveloc					
Aristote					
Ombre					
Trot	28-40				
Vair Palefroi				37;44	
Cort Mantel					
Cor					
Narcisus					
Piramus et Tisbé					
Desiré	98-100		[277-94] [409-13]		87
Doon					
Guingamor					14;21
Graelent					15
Oiselet			(133-42) (147-48)		
Conseil		(111)		(48)	
Amour					
Melion					(12)
Lecheor					
Nabaret					
Tyolet					
Tydorel					
Espine					
Epervier					

Male	<u>renom</u>	<u>vasselage</u>	<u>barnage</u>	<u>gays</u>
Guigemar				
Equitan				
Fresne				
Bisclavret				
Lanval				
Deus Amanz				
Yonec				
Laustic				
Milun				
Chaitivel				
Chievrefoil				
Eliduc				
Ignauze	110	149	173;593;153	273
Haveloc				
Aristote				
Ombre				
Trot				
Vair Palefroï				
Cort Mantel				
Cor	506			
Narcisus				
Piramus				
et Tisbé				
Desiré				
Doon				
Guingamor				
Graelent				
Oiselet				
Conseil				
Amour				
Melion				
Lecheor				
Nabaret				
Tyolet				
Tydorel				
Espine				
Epervier				

Female	<u>beauté</u>	<u>courtoisie/</u> <u>courtois</u>	<u>sage</u>	<u>prouesse/</u> <u>pruz</u>	<u>franche</u>
Guigemar	704				
Equitan	31-37	51	51		
Fresne	237;253	238;254	254	482	239;311
	482		482		
Bisclavret	22				
Lanval	72;94-96		72	72	
	100;105-06				
	(301);550				
	563-69				
Deus Amanz	21	22			
Yonec	22;24-25	22	22		
	(98);216				
	227;322				
Laustic		14	14		
Milun	23	24			
Chaitivel	11;31				
Chievrefoil					
Eliduc	18;294		9	710	
	710;1022		710		
Ignauze	42;129;143				
	177-78				
	(631-51)				
Haveloc	211				
Aristote	277;286-95				
	297				
Ombre	324	315;341	341	315	
Trot	80	80			
Vair Palefroi	665	667			667
Cort Mantel	(264)	(27)			
Cor	511-12				
Narcisus	130;568-69				
Piramus et Tisbé	6-8				
Desiré	(137-40)		(18)		
	156;18. -93				
	209;691-92				
Doon	10	10			
Guingamor	(40);		497		
	430-35				
	475				
Graelent	218-22;458				
	593-97				
Oiselet					
Conseil			752		752
Amour	39	39			
Melion	91-96				
Lecheor	5	56	55	58	56
Nabaret	7	7			
Tyolet	323-26;526				
Tydorel	9				10
Espine	26	23		23	
Epervier	31;42			32	

Female	<u>noble</u>	<u>vallans</u>	<u>gentillesse</u> <u>/gentille</u>	<u>debonnere</u>	<u>afetement</u> <u>/afeitiée</u>
Guigemar					
Equitan					
Fresne					254
Bisclavret		21			
Lanval					
Deus Amanz					
Yonec					
Laustic					
Milun					
Chaitivel					12
Chievrefoil					
Eliduc	9				
Ignoure	82	142;356			
Haveloc					
Aristote					
Ombre			338	338	
Trot					
Vair Palefroi					
Mantel					
Cor				538	
Narcisus			567		
Piramus et Tisbé					
Desiré					
Doon					
Guingamor					
Graelent					
Oiselet					
Conseil					
Amour			37;38		
Melion					
Lecheor	5				
Nabaret	7				
Tyolet	526				
Tydorel					
Espine					
Epervier					30;40

Female	<u>gente</u>	<u>asceinée</u>	<u>valor</u>	<u>sens</u>	<u>enseignée/ bien aprise</u>	<u>savoir</u>
Guigemar			520	520		
Equitan						
Fresne					253	
Bisclavret						
Lanval						
Deus Amanz						
Yonec	(98)					
Laustic		14				
Milun						
Chaitivel				49	11	
Chievrefoil						
Eliduc						
Ignauze	42;100 358					
Haveloc						
Aristote						
Ombre						
Trot		81				
Vair Palefroï			665			
Mantel						
Cor						
Narcisus	568					
Piramus et Tisbé				118		
Desiré						
Doon						
Guingamor					497	
Graelent						
Oiselet						
Conseil						
Amour						39
Melion						
Lecheor					55	
Nabaret	7					
Tyolet						
Tydorel						
Espine						
Epervier						



Female	<u>envoisiee</u>	<u>riant</u>	<u>vallant</u>	<u>bone</u>	<u>cointe</u>	<u>douche</u>
Guigemar						
Equitan						
Fresne						
Bisclavret			21			
Lanval						
Deus Amanz						
Yonec						
Laustic						
Milun						
Chaitivel						
Chievrefoil						
Eliduc				709; 959		
Ignauze	81				82	124; 193
Haveloc						
Aristote						
Ombre						
Trot						
Vair Palefroi						
Cort Mantel						
Cor						
Narcisus						
Piramus et Tisbé						
Desiré						
Doon						
Guingamor						
Graelent						
Oiselet						
Conseil						
Amour						
Melion						
Lecheor						
Nabaret						
Tyolet						
Tydorel						
Espine						
Epervier	32	32				

Female	high birth	fine clothing	enors/ honoree/ prisee	amee cherie	hautece/ haute
Guigemar Equitan Fresne			312	241;308 311-12	
Bisclavret Lanval		101-06 559-62			
Deus Amanz	21				
Yonec	21			24	
Laustic					
Milun	21-23				
Chaitivel				30	
Chievrefoil					
Eliduc	10;16				
Ignauze	43	102-03 160-61	82		
Haveloc	204-12				
Aristote					
Ombre					
Trot		82-96 176-85			
Vair Palefroi					
Cort Mantel					
Cor					
Narcisus	269;385 474 599-601				
Piramus et Tisbé	1-4				
Desiré		(135-36) 685-88			
Doon					
Guingamor					
Graelent		598-601			
Oiselet					
Conseil					
Amour			38		33;36
Melion	107-08				
Lecheor					
Nabaret	6				
Tyolet	(49) 327;340				
Tydorel					
Espine	25				
Epervier					

ABBREVIATIONS

Annales:E.S.C.	Annales:Economie Société Civilisation
B.B.C.S.	Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies
B.B.I.A.S.	Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society
C.C.M.	Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale
C.F.M.A.	Classiques Français du Moyen Age
M.L.N.	Modern Language Notes
M.L.R.	Modern Language Review
P.U.F.	Presses Universitaires de France
R.L.R.	Revue des Langues Romanes
S.A.T.F.	Société des Anciens Textes Français
Z.R.P.	Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie
Z.F.S.L.	Zeitschrift für Französische Sprache und Literatur

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ADDENDA

The works included in the bibliography above were all read in the course of my research for this thesis, and can be considered to have influenced my understanding of the lais either directly or indirectly.

The texts below are either ones that I have read since completion of my thesis or that have been recommended as relevant to it.

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